

# Walden University

College of Education

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
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Abstract

Special Education Teachers' Perceptions of Implementing Positive Behavior

Interventions and Support Frameworks for Students with Disabilities

by

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EdS, Columbus State University, 2015

MSW, Wayne State University, 2006

BS, Michigan State University, 2003

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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## Abstract

The problem explored in the study was that elementary and middle school special education teachers in the southeastern United States were not using positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) strategies with their students with disabilities (SWDs), even though the framework had been implemented at their schools. Perceptions of elementary and middle school special education teachers who implemented PBIS with SWDs were explored in this basic qualitative study. The study was grounded in the concerns-based adoption model, which could be applied to people experiencing change and allows researchers to identify and interpret the extent of their concerns. The research questions answered reasons why elementary and middle school special education teachers did not implement PBIS strategies with their SWDs and what special education teachers' perceptions were when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with 10 elementary and middle school special education teachers. Following qualitative data analysis, significant themes emerged indicating that teacher reluctance to implement PBIS was linked to a lack of consistency and buy-in, and there was inconsistency in applying strategies to students perceived as having limited cognitive ability to understand PBIS. Two additional themes emerged, focusing on teacher perceptions of students' long-term responses to PBIS and the perceived need for a modified PBIS curriculum to ensure faithful implementation. Social change could be positively impacted by this study by informing training for special education teachers on how to modify PBIS strategies to make them relevant to their students and empower special education teachers to share their perceptions on the implementation of PBIS strategies with SWDs.

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## Dedication

This project is dedicated to my father, the late Dr. Robert James Burton, who passed away unexpectedly on December 25, 2021. Thank you for always encouraging me to push forward to my higher self. Whenever I wanted to quit, your voice prompted me to keep going. Completing this doctorate was my promise to you. Thank you for everything, Daddy. I hope I have made you proud. To my husband Courtney and daughter Kensington, words cannot express how thankful I am for you! Thank you for supporting, loving, and always giving me what I needed to keep going even when it got hard. I love both of you so much. To my Mommy, thank you for always believing in me even when I did not believe in myself. You have always been my biggest fan, cheerleader, and supporter; I am thankful to have grown up with you as my mom. I am a better woman because of you! To my family and friends, thank you for the group texts, funny memes, unconditional love, support, and encouragement!

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

The local problem driving this study is that despite implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) at select schools in the local school district, elementary and middle school special education teachers often do not use the strategies with their students with disabilities (SWDs). The results from this study may help the local school district close the research-practice gap that exists within the school district. The Department of Education at a school district in the southeastern United States began working with the National Center on PBIS in 2008 to develop a plan to implement PBIS to focus on being proactive and preventing problems by continually teaching, modeling, and practicing appropriate behaviors.

Certain schools in the local district adopted PBIS in 2013-2014 to teach students social skills, including how to act in different school settings and during specific school activities. Other schools had staggered implementation and began implementation 3 years later. The PBIS framework was implemented at a school in the southeastern district in the fall of 2017 in response to a district-wide initiative to implement PBIS in most schools. Each school was responsible for creating a common language and student expectations to help create a culture that maximizes teaching and learning. However, these schools struggle to implement effective methods to address disruptive student behavior and reward positive student behavior. Despite its validation and use in districts across the United States, many teachers within the local school district have voiced concerns about incorporating PBIS strategies into their workload.

A high percentage of the teachers at Gables Middle School (pseudonym) reported that the strategies within PBIS are inappropriate for SWDs. One teacher stated that “teachers should not have to reward SWD for doing what they are supposed to do” and that she “did not understand how to implement the PBIS strategies in a method that her students could understand.” Another teacher stated that “it is difficult to become engaged in PBIS because the rewards are inconsistent, and most teachers do not use it.”

While it generally takes approximately 3 years for training to be conducted and for the model/framework to be fully implemented (Filter & Brown, 2019; Filter et al., 2016), many teachers at Gables Middle School opposed PBIS during the installation phase. The opposition was due to school leaders not securing staff buy-in during the exploration/adoption phase. One teacher stated, “due to a lack of understanding and feeling that SWDs were not benefitting from the PBIS initiative.” According to studies on successful implementation of PBIS, during the exploration/adoption phase, staff buy-in should be at 80%, and they should be participating and fully invested in the PBIS initiative (Filter & Brown, 2019; Filter et al., 2016). These best practices were not followed in the local school. A school administrator at Gables Middle School in the local district stated that “while teachers are implementing PBIS, it is not done with fidelity, so they are not reaping the benefits that PBIS can offer in terms of behavior management because neither the teachers nor SWDs have fully bought into the initiative.”

### **Rationale**

Despite PBIS implementation at select schools in the local school district, elementary and middle school special education teachers are often not using the strategies

with their SWDs, and they usually do not share their perspectives of why they refuse to use the strategy with their PBIS team and instead share their dissatisfaction with their special education teacher peers. One special education teacher stated, “PBIS is not useful for our kids, and no one [administrators] cares that they do not use it.” Other teachers expressed that their students do not benefit from it and are not empowered enough to share their thoughts with administrators or the PBIS committee.

PBIS is a nationally acclaimed and scientifically validated framework for delivering a series of behavioral instructional supports needed to improve students’ educational and behavioral outcomes (Angus & Nelson, 2019; Sugai et al., 2000). PBIS uses a multi-tiered preventative approach to shape student behavior and provide educators with a protocol for managing disruptive behaviors (Angus & Nelson, 2019; Sugai & Horner, 2009). The local school district has implemented PBIS at several schools; in many cases, this was done without feedback from the elementary and middle school special education teachers who are required to implement the strategies with their students. As noted, successful PBIS implementation during the exploration/adoption phase requires staff buy-in at 80% (Filter & Brown, 2019; Filter et al., 2016), which was not followed in the local school. A school administrator at an elementary school in the local district stated that it was difficult to get veteran special education teachers to engage in the PBIS initiative.

Negative staff attitudes about PBIS and perceptions of PBIS could hinder teacher buy-in of the framework and ultimately impact the success of the framework (Macy & Wheeler, 2020, p. 18). PBIS teams and committees at schools in the local district need to

ensure that they include special education teachers to ensure that all teachers buy in to the initiative and implement the framework with fidelity. This qualitative study was conducted to explore the perceptions of special education teachers not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs. Recognizing that this is an issue in several schools in the local district, the results of my study may provide information on how to encourage special education teachers to join PBIS committees so that they can share their perceptions. This study may provide information on how schools can provide training inclusive of all educators and how special education teachers can modify their schools' PBIS strategies to be more accessible to their students.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following are the definitions of terms used throughout the study:

*Concerns-based adoption model (CBAM):* The adoption model provides tools and techniques that enable school leaders to assess staff concerns while providing necessary support to ensure success (Hall & Hord, 2019).

*Discipline referral:* A way for a teacher to refer a student to an administrator to be disciplined. It is usually an online form or portal that a teacher will fill out and submit to their grade-level administrator with information about the incident and what steps the teacher has taken to correct the problem. An administrator (usually the grade-level assistant principal) will be assigned the referral and decide how to discipline the student. Since behavior is often handled in the classroom, a referral means that the student's behavior is becoming increasingly disruptive to the classroom environment. The teacher



has tried to discipline the student independently without success (Center on Positive Behaviors Interventions & Supports, 2022).

*Professional Development (PD):* The process whereby an individual acquires or enhances the skills, knowledge and/or attitudes for improved practice; processes and activities that change the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions of individual (Nguyen, 2019, p.32).

*Stakeholders:* Anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of the school (students, administrators, teachers, parents, and additional staff members). Stakeholders have a “stake” in the school and its students due to their personal, professional, civic, or financial interest in the school community (Pizmoney-Levy et al., 2018 ; Torres, 2021).

*Students with disabilities (SWDs):* A student with disabilities is a student who is of an age at which students without disabilities are provided elementary and secondary educational services; of an age at which it is mandatory under federal law to provide elementary and secondary educational services to students with disabilities; or a student to whom a state is required to provide a free appropriate public education under the IDEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

*School-wide positive behavior interventions and support (SWPBIS):* A systematic approach for implementing proactive school-wide discipline and is currently being implemented in over 7,000 schools in over 37 states (Sugai & Horner, 2020). PBIS aims to improve school climate and prevent student problem behaviors across all school settings. Essential elements of PBIS include: (a) building a culture within the whole school that will serve as a foundation for both social and academic success, (b)

emphasizing early identification and prevention of problem behavior, and (c) directly teaching appropriate social skills to all students, and modifying or rearranging the school context when necessary to prevent problem behavior, (d) using a three-tiered continuum of behavior support practices to prevent problem behavior, and (e) actively using data for decision-making (Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, 2022).

### **Significance of the Study**

The local problem of this study is that elementary and middle school special education teachers are not implementing the PBIS framework with their SWDs. Any attempt to understand a teacher's experiences must be examined before a positive social change can occur (Hall & Hord, 2019). The PBIS framework promotes school success by using evidence-based methods to provide a multi-tiered curriculum to support student behaviors (Fallon et al., 2015; McDaniel et al., 2017). This qualitative study could contribute to the local setting by providing information on special education teachers' perceptions of PBIS. It may also provide data-driven insights from the lens of practicing special education teachers who may want to share their experiences when implementing PBIS with SWDs. The findings may give special educators, school leaders, and school districts ideas on how gaining special education teacher feedback could improve overall effectiveness when using the SWBPIS framework. These outcomes may, in turn, maximize a positive impact on the growth and performance of SWDs.

Positive social change is "a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals" (WaldenUniversity, n.d.). This study could help school districts better understand teacher

perceptions of PBIS and learn how to gain more teacher buy-in. In gaining insight into teacher perceptions, school leaders could use the information to support teachers using the framework and interventions to improve student behavior. The results of this study could also be used to give other districts outside of the Southeastern region a better understanding of how to support, engage, and train special education teachers implementing PBIS with SWDs. The results of the study may encourage special education teachers to join PBIS committees to share their perceptions, inform school districts how to provide training that is inclusive of all educators, and provide information on how special education teachers can modify their schools' PBIS strategies so that they are more accessible to their students.

### **Research Questions**

The problem at the local district is that elementary and middle school special education teachers' perceptions of PBIS were not documented even though they are required to implement PBIS with SWDs. This basic qualitative study aimed to gather perceptions of elementary and middle school special education teachers implementing PBIS with SWDs. The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ 1: Why are elementary and middle school special education teachers not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs?
- RQ 2: What are elementary and middle school special education teachers' perceptions when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs?

### **Review of the Literature**

I obtained scholarly documents from Walden University's library interface. The

academic databases searched included SAGE, ERIC, and EBSCO. These articles expanded my understanding of PBIS, its history, basic qualitative research, and CBAM. Filters were set for 2018 through 2024 to obtain the most current articles and studies, and the keywords included *PBIS*, *SWPBIS*, and the *Concerns-Based Adoption Model*. Examples of other searches included *SWDs* and *SWPBIS*, *staff buy-in*, *SWDs* and *school discipline*, *teacher perceptions of PBIS*, and *barriers and challenges of PBIS*. References from the articles within the 2018-2024 guideline were added to expand the literature search further. Articles on PBIS and SWPBIS yielded the most results, with 1,375 articles narrowed down based on the study population, location (only focusing on studies within the United States), and type of study (primarily using other qualitative studies). SWPBIS and SWDs yielded the least results with 16 articles. I reviewed this section's literature from peer-reviewed journals, articles, and books. Educational data from the southeastern United States was essential to providing information about percentages of suspensions, discipline, and PBIS implementation within the local district. Historical documents were used to overview the history of PBIS. Literature related to teachers' perceptions of PBIS and SWDs' responses to PBIS was used to comprehensively examine PBIS, teacher perceptions, and SWDs.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was guided by the CBAM, which identifies and provides ways to assess seven stages of concern, including (a) awareness, (b) informational, (c) personal, (d) management, (e) consequence, (f) collaboration, and (g) refocusing (Hall & Hord, 2019). The CBAM was developed at the University of Texas during the 1970s and can be

applied to people experiencing change. It allows researchers to identify the change, interpret the extent of their concerns, and develop data-driven recommendations for continuous improvement and support (Hall & Hord, 2019; Olson et al., 2020). This theory originated from Frances Fuller's work, which worked to understand teachers' concerns (Fuller, 1969). The CBAM supports researchers in understanding the process of change, how individuals respond to change (PBIS implementation) and how to ensure that the correct actions are followed to ensure the success of the change initiative PBIS training (Hall & Hord, 2019). The CBAM describes the change process as an intensely personal experience in which individuals progress through various stages regarding their emotions (i.e., reluctance), capabilities (i.e., training), and ability (i.e., efficacy) to work adaptively and systemically where progress is monitored continuously (Hall & Hord, 2019).

The CBAM has been used in educational settings for more than 40 years to gain a better understanding of educators' concerns and behaviors (Olson et al., 2020; p. 50). The CBAM model can be used to evaluate and understand the change process while also helping to develop and design professional development (PD) programs based on the faculty's concerns regarding the change (Alaa, 2019). For example, Hollingshead (2009) used the CBAM framework to understand better how teachers adopted a character education program implemented district-wide. Haines (2018) also used the CBAM to study PD for teachers and how they responded to the implemented changes. Understanding the change process and how educators respond to change is vital to achieving student success. Each educator can react to a new program with unique

attitudes and beliefs, and each person will use a new program differently (Sugai & Horner, 2020).

### **CBAM in Schools**

The CBAM has been used to understand how teachers responded to implemented district-wide programs and to study how teachers responded to implemented PD programs (Hall & Hord, 2019). Because the CBAM is grounded in change science, the key goal of CBAM is to show that change is personal, requires time, is a process instead of an event, and change requires the whole system to be effective (Hall & Hord, 2019). School districts often use strategic plans to implement the district's vision and accomplish meaningful goals for their students, stakeholders, and community members (Olson et al., 2020). The CBAM is often used because of its multiple methods that help provide a complete picture of implementation while providing a broad view of educators' beliefs and attitudes (Olson et al., 2020). The implementation of something new is often called an "implementation bridge" due to change being a process that takes time and usually requires time to "get over" each stage (Bryk et al., 2016; Hall & Hord, 2019).

### **History of PBIS**

During the 1980s, educators and researchers identified a need to document effective interventions for students with behavior disorders (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). In response to this need, researchers at the University of Oregon began a series of studies focusing on prevention, school-wide systems, student outcomes, and explicit social skills instruction (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021; Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). In 1997, the Individuals with

Disabilities Act was reauthorized. Rob Horner, George Sugai, Geoff Colvin, and several other researchers established the Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support to develop evidence-based practices for schools to deal with student behavior (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021). According to Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) (2021a), the center's primary focus was to provide technical assistance to schools in implementing evidence-based practices to improve support for students with behavior disorders.

PBIS is a preventative, positive, and systemic framework that, when implemented correctly, can affect meaningful educational and behavioral change (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). It is a model that prioritizes prevention over punishment by actively addressing environmental factors that might cause troublesome behaviors. When first implemented, the overarching aim of PBIS was to change the school environment positively by improving student behavior, social learning, and organization standards (Sugai & Horner, 2020). Interventions in PBIS are organized into a three-tier framework that supports all students along a continuum to maximize positive outcomes and manage data (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021a). Tier I focuses on primary or universal support for students, so all students experience Tier I level support (Horner & Sugai, 2015). Schools implement Tier I level of support when they establish a positive school-wide social culture by defining behavioral expectations, establishing a system for reinforcing expectations, implementing a consistent system for redirecting behavioral errors, and collecting meaningful data (Sugai et al., 2014).

Tier II level support focuses more on moderately intense support that targets

students with ongoing problem behaviors and provides them with elevated behavioral expectations and self-regulation skills (Center on PBIS, 2022). Tier III support includes individualized assessments, plans, and a support team to meet the student's needs. It is thought to be needed less than Tier I and Tier II interventions (Center on PBIS, 2022). Tier II supports are targeted to help students who are not successful with Tier I supports alone and are at risk of developing more severe problem behaviors (Center on PBIS, 2022).

PBIS is based on academic, social, individual, and group student outcomes while highlighting appropriate ways to support students in the classroom, non-classroom, school-wide interventions, supports, and wraparound processes (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Since its inception over two decades ago, about 27,294 schools have implemented PBIS, affecting over 15 million students and resulting in 35% fewer office discipline referrals and 46% fewer out-of-school suspensions (Gage et al., 2020). Instead of only focusing on packaged or manualized interventions, the PBIS framework highlights adopting evidence-based research practices that support all students across school-wide, non-classroom, classroom, and individual student routines (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

### **Implementation of PBIS in Schools**

Several benefits of implementing PBIS include improved student outcomes, improved staff morale, increased positive perceptions of school climate, and reductions in behaviors that lead to discipline (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021). Successful implementation of PBIS does not occur unless all stakeholders buy-in and support the framework (McDaniel et al., 2017; Martinez et al., 2019). When implemented with fidelity, PBIS resulted in



fewer suspensions for students with disabilities (Gage et al., 2018). The OSEP Center on PBIS reported that 26,000 schools across the 50 states had received training and assistance implementing PBIS since July 2018; other districts in other countries have also adopted PBIS practices (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021a; Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on PBIS indicates that 25,911 schools are implementing PBIS in the United States and other countries, including Australia, Iceland, New Zealand, and Canada (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021).

Misconceptions about PBIS can negatively impact the success of implementation. One misconception is that PBIS is an intervention or a practice, the Center on PBIS (2022) stated that PBIS is better described as a framework or approach that encourages clearly defined and meaningful student outcomes focused on data-driven decision-making and problem-solving processes. Another misconception of PBIS that can impact successful implementation is that PBIS's emphasis on tangible rewards can negatively impact a student's motivation (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). While tangible rewards can be provided to the students, positive feedback on their social skills and behaviors has positively impacted academic and social behavior achievement (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). Lastly, Flannery et al. (2018) and Feuerborn et al. (2017) found that some teachers do not understand the nature of PBIS or its requirements, which causes them to have other misconceptions that cause them not to support the PBIS framework.

Several tools are used to measure effective PBIS implementation, including Benchmarks of Quality, Tiered Fidelity Inventory, and The School-wide Evaluation Tool

(SET) (Scherer & Ingle, 2020). These tools are self-assessments completed by school staff multiple times a year and determine if all components of PBIS are in place (Scherer & Ingle, 2020). Because PBIS/PBIS fidelity is associated with better student outcomes, school districts look for ways to ensure that all stakeholders obtain the skills required for success (George et al., 2018). Components of effective implementation include data analysis, how behavioral expectations are taught, staff buy-in, and whether a school team is dedicated to ensuring that PBIS is implemented with fidelity (Scherer & Ingle, 2020). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education (2021) emphasized that to effectively implement a school-wide behavior framework and create a safe and positive school climate, schools should provide PD and training opportunities for all staff, including principals, teachers, school support staff, and if present on campus, as well as school-based law enforcement officers. This training should include clear guidance on engaging students, promoting positive behavior, and responding appropriately—and consistently with any staff member’s role—if students misbehave (US DOE, 2021, p. 3).

Several studies have indicated that teacher perceptions of PBIS tend to change over time (Wienen et al., 2018). In another study, Tyre and Feuerborn (2021) found that up to 97% of staff interviewed voiced their support for implementing the PBIS framework. Those same staff expressed several concerns about implementation and perceived barriers to successful implementation. The perceived barriers to implementation can include inadequate time and resources, poor school climate, systemic implementation issues, a lack of staff cohesiveness, and a lack of leadership in change

efforts (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021; Tyre et al., 2019).

## **Broader Problem**

### ***PBIS Barriers and Challenges***

Barriers to effectively implementing PBIS can be organized into personal and school barriers. School-wide barriers include school policies and the availability of resources that support interventions and build a positive school climate (Nichols et al., 2020). Schools with a supportive administrative team and staff create an environment of high expectations and have norms and values usually shared organization-wide (Owings & Kaplan, 2012). Personal barriers include a teacher's knowledge of classroom management and preventative interventions used to help their students; PBIS and its desired outcomes must also be operationally defined by the district and the individual school (Nichols et al., 2020; Office of Special Education Programs, 2021). Teacher burnout can significantly impact their willingness to complete a school intervention; as the teacher's attitude increases positively, the fidelity of behavior interventions also showed a positive increase (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Nichols et al., 2020). Secondary schools may struggle to implement PBIS fidelity due to several factors, including a lack of administrative support or staff buy-in (Scherer & Ingle, 2020). OSEP (2021c) and Scherer and Ingle (2020) found another barrier: students in secondary school often transition to different classes with different teachers who may have varying expectations of behavior; this lack of consistency can significantly impact adequate PBIS implementation and fidelity. Some secondary teachers may assume students can manage their behavior and not understand the need to teach students the expected behaviors.

Added support within the school is required to achieve desired behavioral outcomes (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021c; Scherer & Ingle, 2020; Simonsen & Sugai, 2019).

Despite widespread acceptance of PBIS and its promotion as a successful and valid alternative to harsh discipline methods, Garbacz et al. (2018) stated that lack of family engagement is another barrier to successful PBIS implementation. A study of school principals found that 68% of elementary and 82% of secondary principals stated that engaging parents in improving students' education was difficult (Horner & Sugai, 2015; Office of Special Education Programs, 2021c). Sugai and Horner (2020) described families as core features of the framework and stated that families should be fully involved in developing and implementing PBIS strategies. Another study by Garbacz et al. (2018) described family engagement as crucial for student success. It stated that school systems needed to recognize the multitude of ways families and school staff could positively impact student success.

Systems-level planning to develop and extend PBIS to the home setting encourages schools to engage families in PBIS at school and work to establish and strengthen connections across the home and school setting (Garbacz et al., 2018; Sugai & Horner, 2020). Though some individual statewide organizations have developed approaches for organizing family engagement within a multi-tiered system of support, there is no common framework or strategy for family engagement in the systems and practices of PBIS (Garbacz et al., 2018; Sugai & Horner, 2020).

### ***PBIS and SWDs***

Within the last two decades, there has been a more significant push for more proactive approaches to supporting the behaviors of students with disabilities (Shuster et al., 2017). As of 2018-2019, the number of students who received special education services under IDEA was 7.1 million, or 14% of all public school students, with 33% diagnosed with a specific learning disability (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). PBIS is a tool designed to help manage problem behavior; an unintended side effect is that the inclusion of SWDs in the general education classroom is easier when students learn appropriate ways to manage their behaviors (PBIS, 2020; Schreiber & Beam, 2017). When SWDs learn to manage their behaviors effectively, improved quality of life can be achieved (United States Department of Education, 2021).

Positive behavior interventions and supports are often compared to the response to intervention because both are tiered frameworks that use student data to meet the individual academic and behavioral needs of students and are critical components in any school improvement plan (Schaffer, 2017; Schreiber & Beam, 2017). Response to intervention and PBIS have some shared foundational principles; substantial differences help researchers differentiate between the two (Harlacher & Marx, 2022). The main differences between response to intervention and PBIS are found in the tiers of intervention, how the resources are implemented, and how appropriate behaviors are reinforced (Center on PBIS, 2022).

As the number of SWDs continues to increase and behaviors in schools become more prevalent, educators need more appropriate ways to manage student behavior while

also working to close the achievement gap between general education students and SWDs (Gilmour et al., 2019). Another misconception is that PBIS is newly designed for students with disabilities (Simonsen & Sugai, 2019). As a school-wide multi-tiered approach that emphasizes prevention and proactive intervention, PBIS also ensures that all students are taught explicit expectations applied to all school settings (IRIS Center, 2021). The Center on PBIS (2022) found that 69% of PBIS coordinators indicated that SWDs were not discussed in any initial training sessions on PBIS, and there were no additional strategies for including SWDs in PBIS provided. 31% of respondents believed SWDs could only partially participate in PBIS. Teachers of SWDs who were opposed to PBIS felt that their students would have difficulties understanding expectations. Because of their individualized interventions, involvement in PBIS would be redundant, and they felt that school-wide reinforcement systems were not meaningful to SWDs.

### **Teacher Perceptions of PBIS**

Teachers' perceptions of the ease and usefulness of implementation can impact their willingness to participate fully in the process of PBIS implementation (Nichols et al., 2020). Educators are seen as the primary implementers of the intervention, so it is vital to understand how their perceptions can positively or negatively influence implementation (Nichols et al., 2020). Nylen et al. (2021) and McDaniel et al. (2017) found that teachers often feel that they need ongoing training on the historical and critical components of PBIS to be successful and that many teachers feel unprepared to handle challenging behavior and complex student issues being that they do not have the knowledge or skill to implement positive, proactive strategies. Gibson (2018) studied

teachers at an urban middle school and found that teachers' perceptions of PBIS were entirely based on their level of training and skill and often changed when they became more knowledgeable about PBIS.

Conversely, teachers without high training or skill tend to default to adverse or punitive reactions and get into power struggles with students (McDaniel et al., 2017; Razer, 2021). Teachers with this perception of PBIS explained that their school climate overwhelms them. The ability to suspend students instead of utilizing the strategies provides them with a break from students with challenging behaviors (Gibson, 2018; McDaniel et al., 2017). Teachers may resist implementation for various reasons, including lack of support, time, resources, philosophical tensions, and misunderstandings of PBIS (Tyre & Feuerborn, 2017; Tyre & Feuerborn, 2021; Tyre et al., 2019). Many teachers misunderstand PBIS as a reinforcement without consequences (Tyre et al., 2019). It is essential for teachers to fully understand the application and principles of PBIS to implement the strategies successfully and with fidelity.

### **Factors Contributing to Positive PBIS Outcomes**

In additional literature, many researchers found that most teachers interviewed had positive perceptions of PBIS. Feuerborn and Chinn (2017) found that teachers believed that PBIS, when implemented correctly, improved students' academic and behavioral outcomes. Teacher consistency and buy-in were continually highlighted as factors that positively impacted the success of PBIS (McDaniel et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2020). Gage et al. (2018) stated that when implemented with fidelity, PBIS has decreased in-school and out-of-school suspensions while significantly improving school climate and

student engagement. Lastly, there needs to be an understanding of the “what” and “why” of PBIS district-wide; there needs to be support for all stakeholders through training that addresses the unique needs of each school and their targeted student and teacher group (Office of Special Education Programs, 2021c). These supports help increase the probability of district-wide success of the PBIS initiative.

### **Staff Buy-In of PBIS**

Successful implementation of PBIS requires the buy-in of all staff members; without it, the initiative’s success becomes increasingly difficult. While PBIS is a universal framework that addresses challenging behaviors, staff attitudes toward the intervention can directly impact the framework’s success (Macy & Wheeler, 2020). Without staff buy-in, required interventions may not consistently occur, negatively affecting the effectiveness of PBIS implementation. A study by Bruhn et al. (2021) found some patterns where the staff were not fully bought into the PBIS initiative. These patterns included 69% of students indicating they did not receive praise consistently, 8% identifying the school-wide expectations correctly, and 60% stating they never saw teachers rewarding their peers (Bruhn et al., 2021).

Another study by Carriere et al. (2020) found that teacher buy-in was at 50%, and most staff stated that communication was inconsistent, student behaviors were addressed differently, and behaviors were addressed inconsistently. Still, most of the team felt that there was a need for PBIS (p. 232). The lack of staff buy-in impacts whether PBIS will be successful. It directly affects how or if stakeholders (specifically teachers) use the interventions consistently to redirect student behavior as required by the initiative.



Teachers in the study stated that their lack of buy-in was tied to a lack of consistency from administrators and past negative experiences with mandated interventions (Carriere et al., 2020). The direct correlation between the lack of buy-in and the success of PBIS is related to the structure of PBIS. PBIS requires all stakeholders to consistently teach behavior expectations, review clear and distinct rules for violations, and provide explicit social skill instruction (Sugai & Simonsen, 2012). Without staff buy-in, PBIS can become less effective, and staff can become more disconnected from the overall vision of the initiative. This can ultimately create roadblocks that impact the ability of stakeholders to support students' behavioral needs and hold their peers accountable (Boden et al., 2020).

### **Implications**

This study can have a positive impact on social change by informing potential training for special education teachers who face potential barriers when implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs. Information obtained from teacher interviews can help identify current gaps in practice in how special education teachers perceive the PBIS skills required to implement with SWDs. The results of this study could encourage school districts to seek out special education teachers to join PBIS committees so that they can share their perceptions. Additionally, it could inform schools on ways to provide inclusive training for all educators and provide information to special education teachers on how to modify their schools' PBIS strategies to be more accessible and relevant to their students.

This PD was developed for the District PBIS team and the school PBIS groups to ensure that the intended audience received the information gathered from the study. The goal of the initial PD is to make the district PBIS team and the local school PBIS groups aware of special education teachers' perceptions and present a plan that addresses their concerns. This PD will be a five-part series presented during pre-planning from July 25 to July 27, 2024. It is expected that this PD will meet the following learning objectives:

1. Provide a thorough overview of the major components of PBIS.
2. Review PBIS expectations and how to gain staff buy-in.
  - a. Review the details of special education teachers' perceptions of implementing PBIS with SWDs.
3. Train and inform participants on staff inclusion and buy-in.
4. Promote the necessity for staff buy-in, inclusion in/on PBIS school and district committees, and continual follow-up for progress.
  - a. Provide a forum for the PBIS community to discuss why there is a lack of buy-in and their perceptions of PBIS.
  - b. Provide a forum to develop a proactive plan of "next steps" that address the special education teachers' perceptions of PBIS and strengthen their buy-in to the school-wide initiative.

### **Summary**

The qualitative study's local problem, rationale, and significance were explained in Section 1. Definitions of terms used throughout the study were included, in addition to the research questions and the study's implications. After reviewing the literature, it was

found that most teachers believed that PBIS could effectively improve student academic and behavioral outcomes, though there needed to be high fidelity and consistency among all stakeholders. Successful implementation required the buy-in of 80% of the stakeholders. The implementation process was handled by a team of 8-12 stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and students. Teacher perceptions were frequently studied; but, there was a lack of studies that focused primarily on the perspectives of special education teachers and how they felt when implementing PBIS strategies with their students. This project study was driven by the perspectives of special education teachers implementing PBIS with SWDs. The section concluded with an exhaustive review of the literature, which further informed this study and the potential implications and PD that would be presented based on the results from the study.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

The basic qualitative study approach was used to guide this study. Qualitative research is used to collect data from a small group of individuals in a natural setting (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is used when the researcher tries to understand how individuals interact with their world, make sense of their experiences, and understand the world around them (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Qualitative research is the most appropriate methodology for collecting and analyzing data to understand teacher perceptions about using PBIS with SWDs. Basic qualitative methodology is the best choice for this study because it mainly collects in-depth data from a small group of individuals identified as a bounded system in a natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Schoch, 2020). The basic qualitative study methodology is used when the researcher, the primary instrument, searches for meaning and understands a specific phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Six common qualitative research designs include basic, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, and critical research (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The phenomenological approach was not appropriate for this study. Phenomenological studies involve examining “lived experiences” provided by the people involved and hold a special meaning for the study participants (Neubauer et al., 2019). The phenomenological approach allows the researcher to understand the lived experience of the study participant while also taking their own beliefs and feelings into account (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Neubauer et al., 2019). The grounded theory approach was

also not appropriate for this study. Grounded theory helps address how things change over time through interviews, observations, and various documentary materials (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Grounded theory constructs a theory from data using comparative analysis; this process was not required to gain insight into special education teachers' perceptions of PBIS. Another approach that was not appropriate for this study was the ethnographic approach because it focuses on human society and culture, referring to beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people (Kramer & Adams, 2017; Ploder & Hamann, 2021). Lastly, narrative analysis and critical research approaches were inappropriate for this study. Narrative analysis uses stories as data, specifically first-person accounts of an experience told in story form (Rodriguez-Dorans & Jacobs, 2020), while critical research aims to critique, challenge, transform, and empower society (Holland & Novak, 2018). To gain an understanding of the perspectives of teachers about the implementation of PBIS strategies, the basic qualitative study approach was best suited to answer the following research questions:

- RQ 1: Why are elementary and middle school special education teachers not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs?
- RQ 2: What are elementary and middle school special education teachers' perceptions when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs?

### **Participants**

The population of participants was 10 out of approximately 1,410 special education teachers employed at an elementary or middle school in the local school district with an operational or distinguished PBIS initiative and years of teaching

experience. Qualitative research studies should involve participants with similar experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). I used purposive sampling to recruit participants with similar experiences. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method that relies on the researcher's sound judgment (Saunders et al., 2019). More specifically, homogenous sampling focuses on one subgroup (elementary and middle school special education teachers) with similar sample members (Saunders et al., 2019).

This process started by selecting 10 special education teachers employed at select schools in the local district (elementary or middle) willing to share their perspectives on using PBIS with SWDs; the inclusion criteria of being a special education teacher using PBIS with SWDs were explained to the volunteers. Participants were recruited through an email sent to their school email address from my Walden University student email account, along with an introductory letter explaining the study and inviting interested participants to contact me by phone or email to volunteer for the study. Qualitative research only needs enough participants to gain different points of view to portray a diverse perspective; this helped select the minimum and the maximum number of participants required for this study. Table 1 provides the demographics of participants.

**Table 1***Participant Demographics*

Participant	Years teaching	Student exceptionalities	Member of PBIS team	Elementary or middle school teacher
Teacher A	20	AU, SDD	Yes	Elementary
Teacher B	17	AU	No	Elementary
Teacher C	4	SDD, SLI	Yes	Elementary
Teacher D	33	AU, OHI, LD	No	Elementary
Teacher E	5	AU, SDD	No	Elementary
Teacher F	12	AU, SDD	No	Elementary
Teacher G	9	AU	Yes	Elementary
Teacher H	10	AU, SDD, LD, OHI	Yes	Elementary
Teacher I	22	EBD, AU	Yes	Middle
Teacher J	19	EBD, SLD, AU, OHI	No	Middle

*Note.* AU = Autism; SDD= Significant Developmental Delay; SLI= Specific Language Impairment; LD= Learning Disability; EBD=

Emotional Behavior Disorder; OHI= Other Health Impairment

**Selection Criteria**

There were three criteria for participation in the study: the participants had to be elementary or middle school special education teachers, their school had to have an active PBIS framework, and they had to work directly with SWDs. There are many methods for selecting appropriate study participants; for this study, approximately 50-60 elementary and middle school special education teachers from the local school district were invited to participate, eventually leading to 10 study participants. When enough teachers did not respond to the study request, I resent the invitation with an opportunity to earn a \$20-\$25 Amazon, Starbucks, or Chick-fil-A gift card to gain the required sample size. Elementary and middle school special education teachers who worked at schools with an active PBIS framework were selected based on their responses to an invitation letter. Purposive sampling was used to find participants who met selected criteria that directly reflected the

study's purpose and guided the identification of study participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Participant Justification**

The local school district is comprised of approximately 1,400 special education teachers; of that number, 50 to 60 elementary and middle school special education teachers were asked to participate in the study to obtain the 10 participants needed. Samples in qualitative research often need to be smaller than in other studies to support the depth of inquiry and to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives per individual (Hennik & Kaiser, 2022; Vasileiou et al., 2018). A successful qualitative sample provides rich data (Sandelowski, 1995; Vasileiou et al., 2018). A sample size of 20 or greater often yields no new information due to informational redundancy, which allows the sampling of new participants to be terminated when no new perspectives have been gained by increasing the intended sample size (Hennik & Kaiser, 2022; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

### **Participant Access**

For researchers to collect needed data, they must first build a connection with the selected study participants (Goldstein, 2017). Accessing participants is not just gaining entry to the research site or obtaining permission from the research site; it also consists of how the researcher introduces themselves to participants, what relationships (if any) will be established with the participants, and how will trust be built between the researcher and study participants (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). For this study, participant access began with gaining consent from the research site and Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to complete the study (approval no. 06-05-23-0982288), the preparation of



interview questions (Appendix A), gaining permission from individual school principals (Appendix D), and providing participants with informed consent informing them of their rights as a study participant. Lastly, participant access was maintained throughout the study's conclusion; each participant received a date, time, and link for the interview (Teams), which was audio recorded with the participant's permission and stored in a password-protected folder on my personal computer. Adam's (2015) guide for semistructured interviews was used to prepare the interview questions, establish the purpose of the interview, length of the interview, confidentiality of the interview, exceptions to the interview process, freedom to refrain from answering specific questions, ability to withdraw from the study at any time.

### **Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationship**

Building a relationship between the researcher and study participants is crucial to qualitative research. The quality of data the researcher obtains depends in many ways on the relationship between the researcher and the study participants (Goldstein, 2017). When the researcher can get close to the participants and build a positive relationship, the data are often richer and more authentic (Goldstein, 2017; Johnson et al., 2020). Several steps were taken to establish researcher-participant relationships, including showing appreciation, personalizing their experiences, and respecting their time. I ensured that the interviews began and ended at the allotted time to respect the time the participants had volunteered to spend with me.

I demonstrated my interest in participants' perspectives and motivation for taking part. Finally, I expressed my gratitude for their time by reiterating how grateful I was that

they had taken the time to contribute to the study and how thankful I was that they had agreed to share their views with me. At the end of the interview, the participants were allowed to speak to me regarding their questions about the study. They were personally thanked for their participation and were sent a copy of their interview for review to ensure accuracy in reporting. By being authentic with the study participants, I fostered positive relationships while encouraging them to be open to sharing their perspectives.

### **Protection of Participant Rights**

Maintaining participant confidentiality is important in qualitative research. Before beginning a study, the researcher must address confidentiality with the IRB and ensure the participants' identities are protected during every research stage (Gubrium & Kaiser, 2012, pp. 462–463). This study was described as a minimal-risk, work-related interview and did not pose any risk to participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants could withdraw their consent anytime. I built rapport with the study participants and created an inviting interview environment while ensuring that all participants would be kept confidential and in secure environments. I verbally read the informed consent to each participant before starting each interview and obtained verbal consent from each participant before starting each interview. I was the only person who knew the true identity of the participants, and each participant was assigned a randomly selected participant code that contained no identifiers. Each participant was informed that the files would be kept per the Walden IRB policy for 5 years and destroyed afterward.

### **Data Collection**

I began data collection by obtaining approval from the local school district and

site permissions from school principals, allowing me to access/recruit their teachers and collect data from them. After obtaining IRB approval, I sought consent from the local school district's superintendent before contacting the principals of select schools to obtain their approval. After gaining written permission from the individual principals, I sent an introductory email to all teachers via school email. I asked them to contact me via email or phone if they were interested in participating in the study. Email addresses and teacher roles were easily accessible through the district's and schools' websites. The recruitment period took 4 weeks until the target number of participants was obtained. When there were not enough participants during the initial collection period, a second email was sent to gain the target number of participants for the study.

A total of 10 elementary and middle school special education teachers employed at a school in the local school district in southeastern Georgia were the participants in this study. Teachers who accepted the invitation to volunteer (10 elementary and middle school special education teachers) were given a consent form and a confidentiality form that was read verbally before every interview. Each participant also received a date, time, and link for the interview (Teams), which were audio recorded with the participant's permission and stored in a password-protected folder on my personal computer. I conducted the semi-structured interviews using a self-designed interview protocol (see Appendix A). Each interview took 45 minutes to an hour. The audio recordings were transcribed using MAXQDA and inputted into individual files of the participants. At the end of the interview, the participants were allowed to speak to me regarding their questions about the study. They were personally thanked for their participation and sent a

copy of their interview for review to ensure accuracy in reporting. Informing participants also meant that the researcher had to provide information about participants' questions. The participants were made aware of (a) the demands on their time, (b) what their participation entailed, potential risks that could have occurred, (c) how the data was to be handled, who would have access to the data; how the final write-up would be disseminated; (d) the purposes, goals, and methods of the research; (e) who supported the research; and any potential risks or benefits of participating (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The primary data collection instrument was semistructured interviews using a self-designed interview protocol. Interviewing in qualitative research is the primary source of the qualitative data needed to understand the phenomenon under study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A semistructured interview is a research technique in which the person being interviewed will be asked open-ended questions that allow them to provide detailed responses (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The interviewer should not ask closed-ended questions, guess what the interviewee might say, or interrupt them when speaking (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). I asked probing follow-up questions and took notes on the participants' answers. The interview questions were reviewed by a district PBIS coach not associated with any selected schools to ensure the study's validity. The interview questions addressed teachers' perceptions of using PBIS with SWDs and contained follow-up questions that probed for more details (depending on the participants' answers; see Appendix A). To minimize my influence on the study, I used

the interview script to ensure all participants were asked the same questions in the same order and had access to the same probing protocol.

The data were collected via an audio recorder, transcribed in MAXQDA, and hand-coded by me. I used my computer's recording device to record the participants' responses and took additional notes to be as accurate as possible. I kept a reflective journal during the data collection and analysis to prevent my opinions from influencing the study, interviews, or data interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Data Process**

Data for the study had been collected over one month and occurred at a mutually feasible time for both parties, including weekends and after-work hours. Elementary and middle school participants were interviewed at a mutually agreed upon time and occurred virtually via Microsoft Teams. Data was generated directly from participants' answers to the interview questions. The participants were informed that their answers to the questions would be recorded (sound, not video), and the gathered data was then submitted to the transcription software MAXQDA. After analyzing the data, significant themes emerged from the special education teachers expressing their perceptions of implementing SWPBIS with their students.

### **Tracking Data**

After gathering all the necessary data, I analyzed the findings. I started by employing thematic data coding to identify correlated phenomena that should be clustered. Data coding transformed collected information or observations into meaningful, cohesive categories (Adu, 2019). The first step in the coding process was to

review the interview transcripts to pre-code and understand the data to identify ideas and concepts related to the stated research question. I created a tentative list of codes by highlighting (by color) common terms, ideas, and any similarities that may have occurred in the interviews (Saldana, 2021). I kept a reflective journal during the data collection and analysis to prevent my opinions from influencing the study, interviews, or data interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Coding is a multi-step process that allows the researcher to merge, condense, layer, and create data categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I organized the data by comparing the notes and audio recordings of the interviews; this data was added to a table that included notes, codes, ideas, and the full interview transcript. The codes were then categorized with groups, overlapping themes, and ideas identified by color (Saldana, 2021). Similar words and the participants' perspectives were placed into categories that highlighted the similarities. This process was repeated until all the data was coded (Table 2). All discrepancies were noted to be analyzed separately. Differences in data typically occurred when data did not align with the theme or explanations; they were often unexpected data contradictions (Li & Deeks, 2022). A plan to resolve the discrepancies was presented for future researchers to consider at the end of a research study to minimize further biases and human error (Li & Deeks, 2022).

**Table 2***Counts of Codes in Transcripts*

Code	Count of code in transcripts
“Ding” sound in app	9
Asbtract concept	5
Behavior (student)	45
Behavior management	6
Behavior matrix	10
Behavior plan	6
Boundaries	4
Buy-in (lack of)	6
Buy-in (+ support)	6
Cognitive ability/cognitively	9
Common language	12
Consistency (lack of)	19
Consequences	3
County-wide expectations	5
Covid	5
Culture	7
Differential reinforcement	10
Expectations	18
Feedback	8
Implementation	6
Incentives	9
Life skills	4
Long-term response	9
Mentors	4
PBIS language	5
PBIS plan	12
PBIS points	6
PBIS rewards app	10
PBIS trainers	4
PD meetings	6
Personal connection	8
Points (school currency)	17
Positive words (encouragement)	5
Positive support plan	6
Pro-reward	21
Quarterly rewards	4
Reinforcement	7
Role model	20
Rules	6
School store (individual class)	13
School store (school wide)	12
School-wide expectation	4
Shared language	9
Tangible rewards	7
Transition (grade to grade; class to class)	4
Teacher training	9
Teams (PBIS)	6
Token board	8

Saldaña distilled the data analysis process into three fundamental steps: coding, developing categories, and theming the data (Saldaña, 2021). While other researchers have elaborated on qualitative data analysis with additional steps, these processes share commonalities (Saldaña, 2021; Yin, 2018). Yin's (2018) in-depth explanation of qualitative data analysis reveals supplementary steps that align with Saldaña's implied process. To establish a structured sequence for data analysis, I employed a five-step approach: (a) compilation; ( b) disassembly; (c) reassembly; (d) interpretation; and (e) conclusion (Yin, 2018). My qualitative data analysis encompassed the following steps: **Compilation:** Initially, I meticulously organized the data, ensuring the secure storage of all recordings, documents, and notes. The process began with the transcription of interviews, where I listened to the audio recordings and cross-referenced them with the transcriptions from Teams. I conducted multiple reviews to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions while safeguarding participant confidentiality through deidentification, which included removing names and site-specific information—this thorough familiarization with the transcripts involved reading and re-reading them, immersing myself in the data. I diligently highlighted words, phrases, and paragraphs pertinent to the research questions (Bengtsson, 2016; Yin, 2018). The highlighted text excerpts were then compiled into a table organized by research and interview questions. This in-depth understanding of participant responses facilitated a smooth transition to the subsequent phase of data analysis, the disassembly process.

The disassembling stage, as outlined by Yin (2018), involves the



decontextualization or disassembly of data, a pivotal step in qualitative data analysis (Bengtsson, 2016; Bingham & Witkowsky (2021). After completing written transcriptions, I embarked on the journey of interpreting and making sense of the data. I conducted both a priori and open coding techniques to begin this process. Reviewing each interview, I diligently highlighted words, phrases, or paragraphs that seemed to encapsulate similar ideas. This disassembling phase entails an in-depth examination of participants' responses and the initiation of organization for the highlighted codes, which will be reassembled in the next step.

With a specific focus on the conceptual framework and research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021), I used the concerns based adoption model to create a priori codes, representing a deductive coding approach. These codes were developed based on the conceptual framework, encompassing terms such as (a) awareness; (b) informational; (c) personal; (d) management; (e) consequence; (f) collaboration; and (g) refocusing (see Table 3).

**Table 3**

*A Priori Codes*

A priori code	Operational definitions
Awareness	I am not concerned about this problem at all
Informational	I would like to know more about this program
Personal	How will teaching this program affect me?
Management	I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials organized
Consequence	How is my use affecting learners?
Collaboration	How can I relate what I am teaching to what others are doing?
Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better

I combed through the participants' responses, searching for text related to these a priori and deductive codes. Once identified, I copied and pasted these highlighted

excerpts into the table (Table 4). After completing a priori coding, I engaged in open coding, an inductive coding process. This involved reviewing the participants' transcripts and coding words, phrases, and paragraphs with descriptors that encapsulated the essence of their responses to interview questions. I used highlighters to distinguish and extract each code and its associated phrases during this open coding phase.

**Table 4***First Round A Priori Codes*

A priori code	First round codes
Awareness	Buy in (lack of) Consistency (lack of) Cognitive ability
Informational	Behavior plan consequences feedback incentives PBIS language positive words (encouragement) school store (schoolwide) Tangible rewards Teams (PBIS)
Personal	Behavior (student) Behavior management Long-term response Culture
Management	“ding” in the app Buy in (+ support) Differential reinforcement Expectations PBIS points PBIS rewards app Points (school currency) Positive support plan Pro reward School store (individual)
Consequence	Abstract concept Behavior matrix Boundaries Covid Life skills Quarterly rewards Rules Transition (grade to grade; class to class)
Collaboration	County-wide expectation Implentation Mentors PBIS trainers PD meetings Reinforcement School-wide expectation Teacher training
Refocusing	Common language Personal connection PBIS plan Shared language

I revisited my literature review to develop preliminary codes, enhancing the coding and labeling process to align with the interviews and existing literature (Durdella, 2019). I used a table and tally marks to analyze raw data and frequency counts of a priori and open codes. This allowed for a comprehensive comparison of assigned codes and identifying potential patterns within participant responses, in line with Weston et al.'s (2001) guidance.

In the reassembling phase, I undertook a comprehensive review to ensure that all data, including my field notes, had been meticulously coded. This meticulous process involved comparing my field notes with the coded transcripts and analytical memos, as recommended by Saldaña (2021). Analytic memos, in particular, were regarded as a vital medium for capturing the thoughts and reflections as they occurred during the analysis process (Saldaña, 2021). These memos were acknowledged as a form of data and, as such, were subjected to coding procedures.

On the other hand, field notes served as the canvas on which I recorded my observations, reflections, and insights, as emphasized by Saldaña (2021). This reassembly phase involved two cycles of open coding. I carefully examined the transcripts for similar codes during the second coding cycle, considering their possible consolidation before progressing to the categorization stage. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) articulated that analytic coding involved grouping codes that naturally appeared related, forming categories. This coding process facilitated data analysis by grouping codes into various sizes, encompassing words, phrases, and sentences, signifying shared meanings, a concept well-documented by Durdella (2019). Subsequently, I identified and delineated

the emerging categories.

Yin (2018) delineated that the interpreting phase is the next crucial step in qualitative data analysis. Here, I scrutinized the codes for commonalities and patterns, aiming to reduce the number of codes from the initial cycle to the subsequent coding cycle. The organization of codes followed this reduction process into meaningful categories. The paramount consideration was to achieve this reduction while preserving the core meaning encoded within each category, a principle emphasized by Bingham and Witkowsky (2021).

It is important to note that data analysis is an iterative process central to comprehending the meaning embedded within the coded data. Maintaining reflexivity is paramount, allowing the researcher to uphold objectivity throughout the data analysis journey, as Ravitch and Carl (2016) and Saldaña (2021) highlighted. I meticulously reviewed this iterative analysis process's transcripts and field notes to unearth evidence of codes, categories, and emerging themes. I continued to leverage the tables to explore patterns across cycles of coding and categories while also seeking out any data anomalies, as Bengtsson (2016) advocated. In the final stage, I derived conclusive insights based on the extensive review and analysis of the data.

In the concluding phase of the data analysis journey, I focused on identifying potential emerging themes. To achieve this, I relied on the tables, valuable tools for visualizing repeating patterns within the codes and categories. These visual aids facilitated the display of the intricate relationships between codes, categories, and themes, organized according to the research questions. The data analysis plan, guided by two

fundamental research questions, sought to delve into why elementary and middle school special education teachers are not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs and what the perceptions of elementary and middle school special education are when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs. This comprehensive plan adhered to a structured 5-step process, encompassing (a) compilation, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding, a methodology in line with Yin's guidance (2018). By diligently implementing this 5-step process, I arrived at a meaningful conclusion rooted in a thorough interpretation of the participant's responses to the interview protocol questions, as prescribed by Yin (2018).

### **Role of Researcher**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), I would take the "observer as participant" role in this study. The observer, as a participant, has access to information to establish an insider identity without participating directly in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is crucial for the researcher to fully define their role to the participants while explaining the research's importance and its reasons (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the researcher, I introduced myself to the participants and explained the purpose of the study and my full role. Shufutinsky (2020) stated that the researcher is the main instrument of the research, collecting, analyzing and reporting the study findings. As the researcher, I had no authority over the participants. To decrease bias, I did not allow any teachers at the school site where I was currently employed or teachers with whom I had a personal relationship to participate in the study.

As the observer, I had direct access to information provided by the participants,

though I was limited by what the participants chose to share with me. Though my goal as a researcher was to recruit and interact with various elementary and middle school special education teachers, my reach was limited because only certain schools in the local district had an active PBIS initiative operating at the operational or distinguished level. The researcher's primary way to collect data in qualitative studies was through interviews. Interviews give the most direct and straightforward approach to gathering detailed and rich data regarding a particular phenomenon (Barrett & Twycross, 2018; Whitehead & Whitehead, 2020). Interviews are typically conducted face-to-face; for this study, interviews were conducted virtually using Teams due to the distance between schools in the local school district. As the researcher, I had to be aware of my potential biases. I worked to eliminate their effect on the study by paying close attention only to the data collected, not my personal beliefs or emotions. I stuck to the interview protocol (Appendix B) to reduce bias and guarantee uniformity.

### ***Researcher Professional Roles and Relationships***

The school district employed me for seven years, and I have been an educator for 17 years. Specific ethical issues could have arisen because I was employed at the local school district. While my role as a special education teacher provided me with a better understanding of teacher perspectives, personal biases could have arisen when conducting a study in my work environment. My personal relationships might have negatively impacted whether participants in the study were truthful with their answers to questions out of concerns about being transparent with someone also employed in the same school district. To counteract this, I ensured that I would not be recruiting

individuals considered to be close colleagues/friends (per the Belmont Principle 1 that ensures respect for persons), and I did not use/promote the fact that I was a teacher in the district to manipulate or increase the likelihood other teachers would volunteer for the study (quid pro quo).

### ***Professional Relationships and Data Collection***

Study participants may be apprehensive about being completely honest about sharing their perspectives about PBIS due to concerns about how administrators would perceive their answers if they could connect the anonymous answers to an individual. The confidentiality of the study participants was secured through the IRB process. The IRB evaluates research studies to ensure they adhere to ethical research procedures and comply with human research guidelines (Walden University, 2022). Confidentiality of the collected data was also ensured by securely disposing of data, devices, and paper records. Sensitive data (names, school locations) were securely disposed of so that they were not accessible by any unauthorized party and that the contents could not be recovered or used for unintended purposes.

Study approval was obtained from the school system before research began to ensure the proposal aligned with their research studies standards. All collected data was stored on a password-protected device and permanently deleted five years after the study was completed. Any electronic identifying data was permanently deleted from the computer, and all written notes, documents, and data were shredded and disposed of properly. Lastly, I ensured that I did not recruit friends or colleagues with whom I had a direct connection. I wanted to guarantee that participants were not under undue influence



or coercion to volunteer and that they knew the need to volunteer was of their own free will, per Belmont Principal 1: Respect for Persons. Recruiting friends or colleagues I knew would often result in potentially biased results (e.g., giving my info or responding to questions they felt or thought I wanted) or withholding honest responses, creating social desirability bias

### ***Bias in Research***

As the researcher, I had to recognize my potential biases and strive to reduce their impact on the study by concentrating mainly on the data compiled, not my private emotions or convictions. I was determined to stick to the standard interview protocol (Appendix A) to minimize bias and ensure uniformity. A specific bias, social desirability, causes study participants to provide answers that differ from their attitudes, values, or beliefs (Larson, 2019). Face-to-face participants often display impression management (desire to look better to others), and researchers should try to directly reduce the bias, understand the causes of the bias, and immediately control its effects (Larson, 2019). Participant social desirability bias can be reduced by carefully wording interview questions and learning to gauge and correct this type of bias. Another way to reduce social desirability bias is to modify how questions are asked.

Instead of asking someone a direct question, the researcher modified questions to neutralize socially acceptable answers. For example, instead of asking, “What do you, as a special educator, do to...?” the question was instead phrased as “What did you think a special educator, facing this situation, would do or how would/should they respond?”, or “In your experience, how did most special educators respond or act in this situation?”

This modification in questioning allowed the focus to be put off them and instead be put on the “collective” or group where they would not worry so much about making sure they looked good or were not deficient in some skill/ability. The researcher ensured objectivity by ensuring all questions were pre-determined and then evenly distributed to multiple participants.

There are several principles that qualitative researchers must follow to ensure that their research is ethical, including honesty, objectivity, transparency, integrity, and openness (Resnik, 2020). “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). If the researcher allows personal bias to impact the data collection and analysis process, many ethical issues can occur in qualitative research. The researcher must understand their central role in developing, implementing, and disseminating educational research (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Researchers must always consider the implications of their role throughout the research process and push against forces that dehumanize and generalize people and their thoughts or ideas (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

### **Ethical Procedures**

There are several principles that qualitative researchers must follow to ensure that their research is ethical, including honesty, objectivity, transparency, integrity, and openness (Resnik, 2020). “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). If the researcher allows personal

bias to impact the data collection and analysis process, many ethical issues can occur in qualitative research. The researcher must understand their central role in developing, implementing, and disseminating educational research (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Researchers must always consider the implications of their role throughout the research process and push against forces that dehumanize and generalize people and their thoughts or ideas (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Sensitive files containing participant information were encrypted to maintain data/participant confidentiality against unauthorized access or disclosure. This process rendered the data unreadable to anyone except the researcher or those given the password key. Data access was also managed to ensure privacy/confidentiality during the data collection process. By managing data access, I ensured that access was only granted to those authorized. Access to the data was secured through strong passwords (16 characters) and two-factor authentication when applicable.

The confidentiality of the study participants was secured through the IRB process. The IRB evaluated the research study to ensure it adhered to ethical research procedures and complied with human research guidelines (Walden University, 2022). Confidentiality of the collected data was also ensured by securely disposing of data, devices, and paper records. Sensitive data (names, school locations) were securely disposed of so that they were not accessible by any unauthorized party and that the contents could not be recovered or used for unintended purposes. Approval was obtained from the school system before any contact with potential study participants occurred to ensure that the proposal aligned with their standards for conducting studies within the school district.

Ethical procedures protected study participants once the IRB and school district approved. Informed consent (Appendix C) was sent to all participants via email, with detailed information about the study, interview procedures, a guarantee of confidentiality, and ways to withdraw from the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Informing participants also meant that the researcher provided information about participants' questions. More specifically, the participants were made aware of (a) any demands on their time; (b) what their participation would entail, potential risks that could occur; (c) how the data would be handled, who would have access to the data; how the final write-up would be disseminated; (d) the purposes, goals, and methods of the research; (e) who supported the research; and any potential risks or benefits of participating (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

No students were included in this study, so there were no ethical concerns related to students, and parental consent was not required. Ethical considerations were also ensured at the interview by treating each participant respectfully regardless of their personal views. All valid answers to questions were accepted. They were reminded that their responses to all questions would remain confidential and that they could stop the interview without fear of penalty. I ensured respect for persons (per the Belmont Principal 1), I did not recruit individuals considered to be close colleagues/friends at any schools I had been employed at, and I did not use/promote the fact that I am a teacher in the district to manipulate or increase the likelihood other teachers would volunteer for the study (*quid pro quo*). Lastly, all collected data was stored on a password-protected device and permanently deleted five years after the study had been completed. Any electronic

identifying data was permanently deleted from the computer, and all written notes, documents, and data were shredded and disposed of properly.

### **Data Analysis Results**

After collecting all the necessary data, I analyzed the findings. I began by using thematic coding of the data to group related phenomena. Data coding transformed collected information or observations into meaningful, cohesive categories (Adu, 2019). The first step in the coding process was to review the interview transcripts to pre-code or understand the data to identify ideas and concepts related to the stated research question. I created a tentative list of codes by highlighting (by color) common terms, ideas, and any similarities that may occur in the interviews (Saldana, 2021). *Coding* is a multi-step process that allows the researcher to merge, condense, layer, and create data categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I organized the data by comparing the notes and audio recordings of the interviews; I added this data into a table that included notes, codes, ideas, and the full interview transcript. I coded them with groups, overlapping themes, and ideas identified by color (Saldana, 2021). I placed similar words and the participants' perspectives into categories that highlighted the similarities. I repeated this process until all the data were coded. I noted any discrepancies to be analyzed separately. Data typically differed when they did not align with the theme or explanations; these were often unexpected data contradictions (Li & Deeks, 2022). At the end of the research study, I presented a plan to resolve the discrepancies to minimize further biases and human error (Li & Deeks, 2022). I used MAXQDA software to complete the transcription while hand-coding the data to

reduce errors. MAXQDA software is an all-in-one qualitative analysis software that allows me to import handwritten notes and audio/video recordings and create transcripts. This software assigned individual documents a specific color and organized them into groups.

Sensitive files containing participant information were encrypted to maintain data/participant confidentiality against unauthorized access or disclosure. This process rendered the data unreadable to anyone except the researcher or those given the password key. Data access was also managed to ensure privacy/confidentiality during the data collection process. By managing data access, I ensured that access was only granted to those authorized. Access to the data was secured through strong passwords (16 characters) and two-factor authentication when applicable.

A priori coding was used to connect responses to interview questions to themes derived from the conceptual framework. Predefined codes were used to connect interview responses to categories and develop themes. After the a priori codes were created, I reread each transcript, underlined repeating words and phrases in each transcript, and matched them with the appropriate a priori code (Table 5). I used open coding to assign codes to repeating phrases in each transcript. The codes were organized by frequency and patterns to generate more significant categories and major themes (Saldana, 2021). The second coding round was used to redefine codes, align data with the conceptual framework, and complete the organization/categorization of the codes (Saldana, 2021).

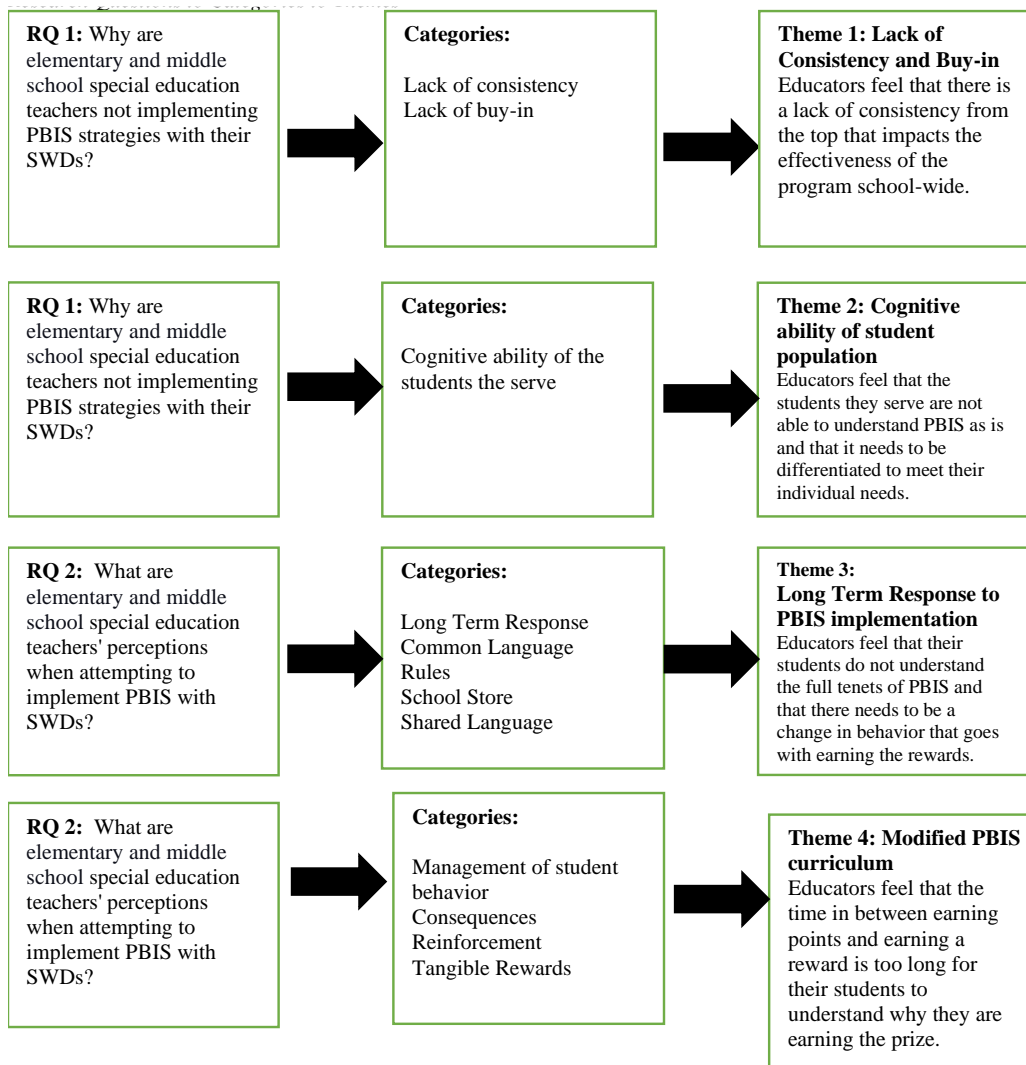
**Table 5***A Priori Code Counts in Transcripts*

A priori codes based on concerns-based adoption model	Count in transcripts
Awareness	34
Informational	67
Personal	51
Management	109
Consequence	46
Collaboration	45
Refocusing	59
Total	411

The participant responses were coded based on their answers to the research questions for this study:

- RQ 1. Why are elementary and middle school special education teachers not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs?
- RQ 2. What are elementary and middle school special education teachers' perceptions when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs?

A meticulous organization of results and a summary of the findings was essential to gain insight into the collected data. Each research question was aligned with themes, and narratives were constructed and substantiated from observations and data analysis. The themes themselves emerged from the wealth of data collected throughout the study. The presentation of the findings was structured in accordance with each research question while delving into participant dialogues. These dialogues were then analyzed to highlight commonalities and specific responses to interview questions directly linked to the research questions. See Figure 1.

**Figure 1***Research Questions to Categories to Themes*



### **Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 was: Why are elementary and middle school teachers not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs? PBIS is designed to transform school environments by implementing strategies that foster positive shifts in student behavior. This transformation primarily revolves around modifying staff behaviors, as noted by Elrod et al., 2021. The fundamental concept behind PBIS involves reinforcing the practice of acknowledging and rewarding students for their positive behaviors. The negative behaviors are effectively addressed and diminished by consistently recognizing and reinforcing these desirable behaviors. In essence, PBIS operates on the principle that the negative is mitigated by accentuating the positive. Despite this, five of the ten teachers stated that their refusal to use PBIS with SWDs was due to their students' cognitive abilities.

Teacher E stated, "PBIS was nice in theory; however, it was not the best for reaching the students I serve because it is abstract and not concrete enough for my students to grasp." Teacher C also stated that the issues with PBIS were because of the students' lack of understanding of what PBIS actually was. Teacher C stated, "It [PBIS] really wasn't effective as a whole behavior management plan because the children never knew when they would receive a tangible reward with the points they earned." Teacher A felt that the students lacked a total understanding of PBIS and further described their lack of understanding:

It is hard for my students to understand a four-token economy and then a reinforcer. So, it is not something that my kids really respond to or that I've seen

changes in them based on it. My students do not understand the function of rules and that rules keep us safe. They have a lack of understanding about establishing boundaries, so I don't think they really understand at all.

Teacher G felt PBIS was good for general education students but not for special education. They felt the "terminology was too difficult to understand and too advanced for students with cognitive deficits." Teacher G felt that in order for it to be effective for the students they served, the program would need to be differentiated to meet the individual needs of all of the students. Teachers J and I stated that the lack of implementation of PBIS had to do with a lack of buy-in from teachers and a lack of consistency. Teacher I stated,

Several teachers aren't even giving out PBIS points this year. So, there has not been any consistency. The team [PBIS] said they would do one thing for the teachers one year, and this year, they are doing something totally different, so a lot of the teachers have given up on PBIS points. On top of that, it's too time-consuming. However, because there is no consistency from the top, there is very little consistency school-wide.

Teacher J mirrored those sentiments and spoke about staff and students' lack of buy-in.

Teacher J stated:

It is a good effort to implement PBIS, but there is not much buy-in from the staff or students, and there is no common understanding of expectations. So, there is a mixed way that the students get feedback and how they get praise or the rewards they have earned. It is just not consistent. Our school has no physical store, so it

requires a lot from the homeroom teachers to get the kids' orders, tally them up, send them to the counselor, and then get the stuff to pass out. It can be very cumbersome, so some [teachers] don't give out points at all. You have some kids that have hundreds of points, so it feels pointless to give them more points because there is nothing special for them to spend it on.

Teacher C felt that for PBIS to work with SWDs, it needed to be differentiated and used at home to implement it effectively. Teacher C stated, "I think PBIS works, generally speaking, for the school, but I think with special education students, a lot of things you do have to be tailored or modified for the specific child." Teacher D felt that PBIS was not being implemented with SWDs because it was not consistently used in all areas of the school. Teacher D stated, "Elementary kids are confused by PBIS because they don't have something consistent across all classes, specials, in the lunchroom and on the bus." Teacher D also stated that they believed successful implementation of PBIS "purely depended on the buy-in of the teachers across all grade levels." In the review of the transcripts, the teachers' comments tended to lean towards lack of consistency, lack of buy-in, and the cognitive ability of their students as the reasons that they were not implementing PBIS strategies with their students.

## **Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 was: What are elementary and middle school special education teachers' perceptions when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs? In order to have clear insight into the teachers' perceptions, several questions were asked to get a broad picture of their perceptions. There were varied responses to this question,

though several teachers mirrored each other's responses. Teacher A had mixed perceptions of implementing PBIS with students. They stated, "It is harder for the students I teach this year to understand PBIS; I was able to use the matrix a lot more with my previous students, but now my students do not understand at all." Teacher D frequently worked with another teacher who strongly believed in the PBIS framework and strongly impacted their perceptions of PBIS. Teacher D stated, "I am very specific when giving points, so they better understand why. For the most part, everyone is consistent with the verbiage, which has helped students understand PBIS more; across the school, expectations aren't different even from grade to grade, so our students always know what to expect." Teacher I stated that all teachers are required to be a part of the PBIS team, and while several meetings focused on expectations, there was still a lack of consistency.

In addition to a lack of consistency, Teacher I felt that the time it took to implement the strategies successfully was "cumbersome." They stated, "If I don't do it [give points] every class period, then I have to go back and add them; that is time-consuming. If anything is going to work, the people in charge have to set the standard, and right now, it's totally out of control; most teachers don't use PBIS because of the time it takes and the lack of consistency from the top." Teacher G noticed that some students felt more connected to their regular education peers when participating in PBIS. Teacher G stated:

I noticed that when students are working as part of that bigger team, it gives my students a connection piece to other people in the school, almost like an

accountability piece; they aren't just trying to do something for themselves. One thing I like about implementing PBIS is the common language of behavior expectations; it's easier to talk to my students, even those with more needs because you can explain what the expectation is school-wide, not hearing different words or different expectations from different teachers; it's all uniform. I modified it for my students a bit to make the expectations more classroom-specific so they can spend their points more often; they don't do well with waiting so long between the points and the reward, if that makes sense. It was a bit too abstract for them, so I helped them plan to save up for big rewards and connect earning rewards to changing behaviors.

PBIS is a proactive approach to school-wide discipline that involves active supervision, positive feedback, and social skills instruction. Full participation in the PBIS programs allows students to become accountable for their behavior with the guidance and support of school personnel. Teacher C shared that "everyone knows and understands what the expectations are because it is fairly catchy; the expectation is to be a respectful, responsible role model and to show those character traits throughout the school day in different parts of the building, including the bus, cafeteria, hallways, and bathrooms." Teacher C also felt that PBIS was useful but only as a toolbox of strategies not as a stand-alone initiative. They also stated that "it is difficult to gauge how the students are perceiving PBIS because most of my students have emerging verbal skills and though we use visuals for everything it has to be tailored to the specific child and modified because there are other strategies more effective than always using PBIS with them."

Teacher E said they try to use PBIS because the county makes them use it. They also stated:

The PBIS system that we're working with is nice in theory, but I don't think that it is a really good system for reaching all students, especially the students in my class. It is not very concrete, and a lot of my students need that. I mean, in general, it is definitely like an incentive when the kids see their name called for a reward at the end of the week, but it doesn't necessarily motivate all kids. So, honestly, it would be a good day if we actually used all of the things in PBIS because I am focusing on using my system that I know works with my kids.

Teacher B focused on the long-term effectiveness of PBIS with their student population and did not believe that the students with disabilities had the same understanding of PBIS as their general education peers. They also stated that:

My students love the ding that is made in the PBIS points app., but they don't understand that they are earning points to buy things. They have the immediate recognition of hearing the "ding" noise, but the long-term response isn't there; the students don't really understand that the noise is connected to points. None of my students are thinking in the moment when they're screaming and yelling and having a meltdown, like oh, I really wish I could get points right now, so I am not sure how long-term the understanding is. To help them connect, I try to give them a tangible token that's more immediate than the points; this is for the ones who can cognitively understand. For the ones that can't they don't realize that they're working towards a reward; they just hear the "ding," and they like that.

Teachers F and H had the most favorable perceptions of implementing PBIS with students with disabilities. Teacher F stated, “I noticed there’s a lot of buy-in from the kids with the different prizes that they can get, and that has changed their behavior from being very impulsive to thinking about their actions or just reflecting on making better choices.” The teacher also felt that the students were responding well to PBIS and stated that “they like it, there’s no real embarrassment with this group of who has more points than their peers because they are more focused on what they can buy from the store. We also use it as a social study tool to teach budgeting and how to save for a bigger prize.” The visual piece of using the app was also a huge incentive for implementation, with Teacher F stating, “The visual on the board helps them see how close they are to earning a prize, and that really works for them; I think seeing the other kids get excited about their points and how they react really helps them.” Teacher H felt that the younger kids responded favorably to PBIS and that they were more impressionable than the fourth or fifth-grade students. Teacher H also stated, “sometimes you can just pull up the board with all of their faces on there and all of a sudden, they will start paying attention because they know I am about to issue points. It is a reward for students, especially those with challenging behaviors, once you find out what they like and find a way to work that into their PBIS.”

Unlike Teacher F and Teacher H, Teacher J had more critical perceptions of implementing PBIS with SWDs. The teacher felt that though the students understood the purpose of PBIS, there were not enough opportunities to engage with it due to an overall lack of consistency. They could make suggestions to improve PBIS overall but did not

feel empowered enough to share those ideas with the PBIS team or administrators.

Teacher J stated:

The student response to PBIS is different from when they are given a regular compliment or verbal praise; there is no more excitement for a PBIS point than just verbal praise. If there was more accountability, then maybe it would be more effective, but now the rewards aren't tangible; there are teachers who never use PBIS. It ends up not being effective for my student population because the lack of consistency really impacts the effectiveness. For example, we give points, but there are limited opportunities to use them. Maybe if the store was open any time or doing lunch, the students would know that things are available to them. Other students will see, like, hey, you can buy a sweatpants day or a no homework day or whatever, so it was really obvious to other kids. That would help buy-in because other students would see what they could get with their PBIS points. I don't want to say that it's not effective, but the way it's used now makes it less effective, if that makes sense.

### **Presentation of Themes**

The data analyses centered on compiling and presenting findings organized around specific themes derived from a comprehensive examination of data collected from the perspectives of 10 special education middle and elementary school teachers. This included interviews with each participant. After reviewing the transcripts of the interviews, four overarching themes emerged and were analyzed based on the two research questions.



***Theme 1: Lack of Consistency and Buy-in***

Educators felt that there was a lack of consistency from the top that ultimately impacted the effectiveness of the PBIS initiative. Though some teachers felt that their school was consistent, most participants stated that the reason for not implementing the strategies with their students was a lack of consistency, buy-in, and accountability. Some teachers started to use PBIS; but, they stopped when they saw peers not using it and that there were no consequences. Many teachers developed their own methods to manage student behavior while still attempting to use PBIS but kept their personal methods as a priority and PBIS on the back burner. In order to manage student behavior, teachers used tangible rewards (candy, physical tokens), token boards, differential reinforcement, visuals, individual student plans, and other methods that they felt were more effective for their student population.

***Theme 2: Cognitive Ability of Student Population***

Educators felt that the students they serve could not fully understand PBIS as is and that it needed to be differentiated to meet their individual needs. Each school is responsible for developing its PBIS motto; some schools involve the staff in the decisions, and others make the decisions unilaterally. Though there were special education teachers on the PBIS committees, none specifically provided their team with feedback on how their students did not respond to PBIS as written based on their cognitive abilities.

Several teachers spoke about the language of PBIS being too “complex” or “abstract” for their students. Though they participated in earning points, many of them

were unable to connect earning points to a need to change behavior. Many PBIS programs asked students to be respectful, responsible, and role models; though there were several instances when teachers stated that their students could not understand what those words meant. Teacher C stated, “There is a need to show students what it means to be respectful, not just hearing the words; there needs to be some additional scaffolding to explain how they can be respectful. Students may understand it better if you used words like nice or simpler synonyms that our kids can understand, and right now, that is not the case.”

### ***Theme 3: Long-Term Response to PBIS Implementation***

Educators feel that their students do not fully understand the purpose of PBIS and that there needs to be a behavior change that goes along with earning rewards in the long term. Teachers spoke about their students loving to hear the “ding” that the app made when someone earned points; though there was very little connection that they earned or did not earn the points because of their behavior. Some teachers rewarded students even though they did not earn it so they would not feel left out.

Teacher A stated that even though the students heard the language to be respectful, responsible, and make good choices, they did not have the prerequisite skills to grasp what that looked like fully. They also stated, “The students are just learning what boundaries are, just learning that rules exist. They have no idea what it means to be respectful or responsible, but they know when you hear the “ding” someone earned something, but they don’t understand what that really means at all.”

***Theme 4: Modified PBIS Curriculum***

Educators feel that the time between earning points and earning a reward is too long for their students to understand why they are earning the prize. Teacher A stated, “Students are expected to make great choices every single day, but then they have to wait four weeks to get a prize; my students really struggle with that.” Most teachers spoke about the need for immediate reinforcement throughout the day for their students and that was not how they were taught to implement the PBIS strategies. Another teacher spoke about the types of rewards offered to the students. Most schools had the PBIS team making decisions with very little student input. So, there were times when the rewards that were offered were unwanted by the students. Teacher C went into further detail regarding the need for a modified curriculum for students, especially those with sensory needs. They stated, “We have students that participated all year and got to the big party, and it was something that was too loud for them, or when we had a water party, there were students that had aversions to getting wet. So, they did everything that was required to earn the reward but couldn’t participate, and there were no alternatives for them. So those rewards do not work for those kids; I feel that there needs to be other options for them in order to make it more inclusive and exciting for all kids, not just those in general education.”

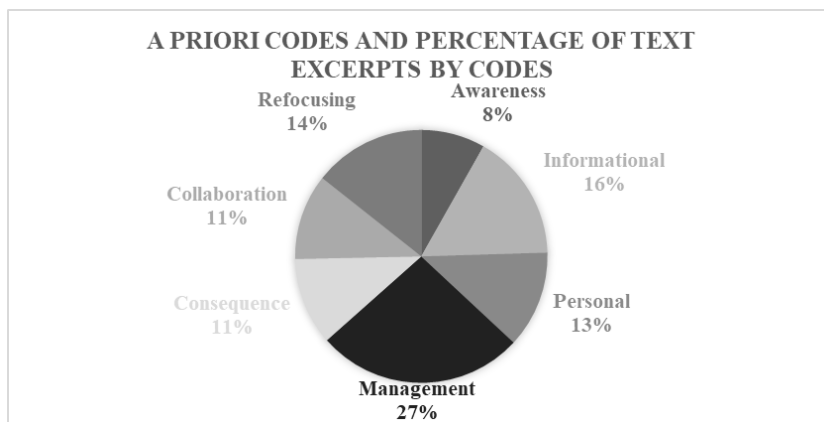
**Discrepant Cases**

After data analysis, there might be samples of study participants whose answers to the interview questions disproved the theory being developed or could have completely modified the study results. These study outliers answered questions opposite to those of

most of the study participants and provided insight into other participants' perspectives. Special education teachers' perceptions on implementing PBIS with SWDs could be obtained from this study; this included all elementary and middle school special education teachers who agreed to participate in the study. After completing this study's data collection and analysis, no discrepant cases were identified; further analysis was not required (Figure 2; Table 6).

## Figure 2

### *Percentage of Text Excerpts by Code*



**Table 6***Text Excerpts and A Priori Codes*

Participant excerpt	Code
Teacher A	
“PBIS is basically our, it is the culture of our school”	Refocusing
“So, of course, so my babies, I don’t really see them responding to PBIS. So, it’s harder for them; it’s even hard for my kids to understand like a four token economy and then a reinforcer. So, it’s not something that my kids really respond to or that I’ve seen changes in them based on it.”	Awareness
Teacher B	
“So, my students love to hear the ding in the app; when I click on it, they don’t understand that there’s points to be spent to buy other things.”	Management
“It’s not effective in the sense that they’re working towards a specific reward. It’s just that they hear the ding, and they like that.”	
Teacher C	
“There’s a rollout to staff each year during pre-planning.”	Informational
“I think that everyone understands what the expectations are; it’s fairly catchy.”	Collaboration
“I think PBIS works, generally speaking, for the school, but I think that just with, you know, special education students, a lot of things do have to be tailored for the specific child, or, you know, modified.”	Refocusing
Teacher D	
“I would honestly say this that purely depends upon the buy-in of the teachers and the grade levels; there are teachers that really do not believe in a system.”	Awareness
Teacher E	
“In theory, I don’t think that it is a really a great system for like reaching all students, especially like the students that I serve.”	Consequence
“I’m very focused on using like my system with them but I keep PBIS on the backburner.”	Personal
Teacher F	
“We have PD meetings every second Monday of the month, and during those PDs, we give a different strategy, different things we can do in the classroom to help.”	Refocusing
“I’ve noticed that there’s a lot of buy-in from the kids with the different prizes that they can get, and that has changed a lot of their behavior from being very impulsive to thinking about their actions.”	Management
Teacher G	
“Currently, the PBIS team was put together at a staff meeting. They had a PowerPoint that they shared out, that kind of gave an overview of how that hierarchy of it worked.”	Collaboration
Teacher H	
“But now I think that they’ve learned some of the strategies, like rewarding the person next to a person that you need to change the behavior, which is a really good strategy.”	Management
Teacher I	
“No, because my classroom management, I can like, manage my class without any PBIS or anything like that.”	Personal
“It is, like I said, there’s no consistency from the top. Therefore, there’s no consistency school-wide.”	Awareness
Teacher J	
“The kids like getting the toy, but they don’t understand the connection of having to change their behavior.”	Awareness
“I don’t think it’s effective because there isn’t any consistency from admin or other teachers.”	Personal

As the researcher, I did not seek out participants who only had a negative or positive view of PBIS; instead, I wanted a group of participants that was representative of the community of the local site. Taking this approach meant that even though the data may show participants with differing views of PBIS, all of their perspectives were welcomed and presented without silencing those with a different view from others. Semi-structured interviews completed one one-on-one encouraged study participants who were shy, quiet, or nervous about “stirring the pot” to be open and honest about their perspectives without fearing going against school norms or not being fully heard by the researcher.

### **Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of a study refers to the procedures the researcher uses to ensure that a study’s quality, rigor, and credibility are consistent (Stahl & King, 2020). The key tenets of trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Stahl & King, 2020). Credibility in this basic qualitative research will be established by ensuring that the interview process is consistent and the issues presented throughout the study are clear. Credibility asks the researcher to link the research findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the study’s findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Credibility in this study will be established through triangulation, using multiple methods, data sources, or theories to understand the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Stahl & King, 2020). To ensure triangulation and help with the reliability and validity of the study, it will be essential to get a comprehensive sampling of elementary and middle school special education teachers to interview. This included

people with various years of teaching experience and exposure to using PBIS with SWDs.

Participants were special education teachers from elementary and middle schools who were aware of PBIS and willing to share their perspectives on implementation with SWDs. Another way to establish credibility was member checking. I completed member checking, which allowed me to share data, interpretations, and conclusions with the study participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). By completing member checking, I allowed the participants to clarify their intentions, correct errors, and provide additional information if necessary (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Stahl & King, 2020).

Transferability of a study occurs when the researcher can show how the findings apply to similar populations, situations, or phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The transferability of the results will be obtained if participants from different schools report the same issues from differing perspectives. Though this study only focuses on elementary and middle school special education teachers of SWDs, the participants may provide enough detail to make this study relevant to other populations. The next step in establishing trustworthiness in a study is to see if confirmability was present in the research process. Confirmability is how neutral the study findings are and focuses on how the results and data were obtained (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The data should be based solely on the responses of the participants and not personal motivations or biases (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

I ensured confirmability by providing an audit trail that detailed data analysis steps and gave readers transparency. Accurate note-taking and recordings/transcripts of

the interviews also helped with establishing confirmability. I limited researcher bias by honestly documenting my thoughts, data interpretations, and rationales for determining themes and patterns during the analysis and coding process. Lastly, dependability was the extent to which other researchers could repeat the study, and the findings would be consistent (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). I established the study's dependability by identifying the steps taken in the data collection and participant selection process. By conducting audit trails, a detailed description of all steps taken during the research process was available to ensure enough information was provided to any researcher wanting to replicate the study successfully.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study is the district's size; the schools are spread across the region and could limit the number of participants if required to drive to another location. In order to overcome this limitation, the interviews will be completed virtually using Teams. The study was limited to elementary and middle school special education teachers working in the local school district. The number of participants were ten special education teachers willing to participate in the study. There were limitations related to only relying on study participants' perceptions as data. Creswell and Creswell (2022) listed several data collection methods appropriate for qualitative research. They stated that the disadvantages of interviews included a lack of depth, an inability to follow up, possible dishonesty of participants, and other dynamics that could interfere with data collection. Lastly, the study's generalizability was impacted due to the inclusion of the perceptions of only a specific group of teachers.



## Summary

The data for this study was exclusively derived from interviews with the study participants, guided by two research questions that led to the development of four key themes. The findings revealed that teacher reluctance to implement PBIS was linked to a lack of consistency and buy-in, and there was inconsistency in applying strategies to students perceived as having limited cognitive ability to understand PBIS. Two additional themes emerged, focusing on teacher perceptions of students' long-term responses to PBIS and the perceived need for a modified PBIS curriculum to ensure faithful implementation. Based on these findings, it is imperative to consider modifications to PBIS strategies to be inclusive of all students. This includes providing options for large rewards and considering diverse sensory needs. Introducing choice options for students in events and adopting a differentiated PBIS language for those who need it can enhance inclusivity. Teacher and student buy-in can be promoted by involving them in the planning process. Encouraging input on prioritized behaviors and desired incentives fosters ownership and commitment, ultimately enhancing the success of the PBIS program.

Section 2 delves into the methodology, outlining the research design, participants, selection criteria, participant justification, access, researcher-participant relationship, rights protection, data collection, analysis, researcher's role, and conclusions. The study embraced a qualitative research approach, apt for exploring teachers' perspectives on implementing PBIS with SWDs due to its suitability for obtaining nuanced insights from a limited number of individuals. Section 3 will focus on the training provided during pre-

planning, titled “*A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens.*” It will detail the training’s description, goals, rationale, literature review, implementation plan, evaluation methods, and implications for social change, drawing from the study’s findings to enhance staff understanding and application of PBIS strategies.

### Section 3: The Project

PBIS is an evidence-based approach for managing problem student behavior while fostering a positive school climate by reinforcing prosocial student behavior (Lawrence et al., 2022; Sugai & Horner, 2002). School teams are trained on how to use the PBIS framework, and then they develop a plan for school-wide implementation specific to the data-based needs of the school (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Horner & Sugai, 2005). More recently, PBIS has been defined as a systems approach to establishing a positive school culture and behavioral support for all students to achieve social and academic success (Pas et al., 2019). This project study was designed to examine elementary and middle school special education teachers' perspectives on implementing PBIS with SWDs. The results of the study showed that teachers were not consistently using the strategies with their students due to a lack of consistency and buy-in, the cognitive ability of their students, their students' long-term response to PBIS, and the need for a modified PBIS curriculum. Based on the findings, a one-time training will be offered to the district's PBIS team to share the study results, develop a plan of action, and address special education teachers' concerns with PBIS as it relates to their student population (see Appendix A). The training is designed to provide insight to the district's PBIS leadership team. In this section, I will detail the project's description, goals, rationale, literature review, implementation, project evaluation, and implications for social change.

Successful PBIS implementation requires stakeholders' buy-in. The school needs to support the implementation of the framework, and special education teachers should

not feel excluded from the school-wide intervention. Many teachers did not feel that their students were the “target audience” of their schools’ PBIS initiative; many did not use it with their students or did not use it with fidelity. The lack of teacher and student buy-in impacted teachers’ perceptions of PBIS and whether they attempted to use the strategies with their students. Consistent evaluation of the program’s effectiveness allows required adjustments to be made and helps improve the practices that impact positive outcomes for all students.

PD is often offered to teachers multiple times a year, and though significant resources are spent on these events, research suggests large numbers of PD do not lead to significant positive change (Patfield et al., 2023). Planners of the PD sessions should consider this when developing and planning effective PD sessions is critical. The PD in this project will be offered to the district’s PBIS leadership staff so they know special education teachers’ perspectives of PBIS. This project can open a communication line between district PBIS leaders and special education teachers, provide deeper insight into special education teachers’ perspectives of PBIS, develop a plan of action to address special education teachers’ concerns, and develop strategies to ensure that students with disabilities are included in the PBIS initiative and can benefit from the framework.

### **Rationale**

Teachers are more likely to implement a fidelity framework if they feel they have a stake in the outcome (Macy & Wheeler, 2020). Special education teacher perspectives should be considered when developing a plan of action to address their concerns. The findings in this study are based on elementary and middle school special education

teachers' perspectives on implementing PBIS with SWDs. Based on the results, educators feel that there is a lack of consistency from the top that impacts the effectiveness of PBIS, they feel that their students are not benefitting from PBIS due to their cognitive ability, and they feel that there needs to be a modified version of PBIS for their students to improve their long-term response to the framework.

This PD aims to make the district PBIS leadership team aware of special education teachers' concerns and equip them with the skills they need to implement PBIS with their students. This PD would not be beneficial to teachers because they are not the individuals who are responsible for training other teachers or ensuring that PBIS is implemented with all students. The participants in the PD have the resources to make needed changes to the district initiative that will empower special education teachers to get on board with the PBIS initiative. Buy-in is achieved when all professionals are a part of the planning and decision-making process (Boden et al., 2020). Ensuring that special education teachers feel that their voice matters and that their students are the target audience for PBIS can increase the probability that schools will have an effective and consistent implementation from all teachers.

### **Review of the Literature**

A scholarly review of the literature was conducted on the importance of PD to teacher growth and expanding their knowledge base. In the dynamic landscape of education, the significance of continuous PD cannot be overstated. As educators navigate the evolving challenges and opportunities within the field, ongoing learning and skill enhancement become imperative. PD catalyzes educational progress, fostering a culture

of innovation, adaptability, and excellence. The literature delves into the multifaceted dimensions of PD in education, exploring its pivotal role in shaping effective teaching practices, promoting student success, and cultivating a resilient and forward-thinking educational community. Ongoing and meaningful PD equips educators with the tools and insights necessary to meet the ever-evolving demands of the modern educational landscape. Teachers and leaders must have regular opportunities to participate in collaborative PD sessions, increase knowledge, encourage active learning, and allow the trainer to elaborate on the information presented (Palmer and Noltemeyer, 2019).

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The main source used to search for relevant literature was the Walden University Library, and the academic databases searched included SAGE, ERIC, and EBSCO. The key search terms included *concerns-based adoption model and professional development*, *professional development*, *PBIS*, and *professional development*, *types of professional development*, *the importance of professional development*, *professional development and consistency*, and *successful professional development*. The literature selection criteria focused on current peer-reviewed literature written within the last 5 years. Some selected literature did not meet all stated criteria, though all selected literature met at least one of the main criteria points.

### **Concerns-Based Adoption Model and Professional Development**

The CBAM is a conceptual framework used to study the process of implementing change (Fuller, 1969). This conceptual framework operates under five main assumptions: (a) change is a process, not an event, (b) change is accomplished by individuals, (c)

change is a highly personal experience, (d) change involves developmental growth in feelings and skills, and (e) change can be facilitated by interventions directed toward the individuals, innovations, and contexts involved (Hall & Hord, 2020). Using the CBAM allows leaders to meet the needs of the participants of PD while also becoming comfortable with the proposed change (Trapani & Annunziato, 2019).

The conceptualization of meaningful PD for this project was rooted in a systematic learning approach, drawing inspiration from the CBAM. Using the CBAM framework as a guide requires PD sessions to identify desired results, determine assessment evidence, and construct a learning plan that provides foundational concepts, content, and skills (Trapani & Annunziato, 2019). By integrating this theoretical perspective into the design of the PD, the project aims to create a structured learning environment that incorporates positive reinforcement and encourages the repetition of desired behaviors. The social learning aspect emphasized the importance of peer observation and interaction, acknowledging the influence of modeling and shared experiences in shaping teacher behavior and practices within this qualitative case study research context. Teachers must have some level of interest in the initiative's success, and all teachers need to feel that their concerns are validated for the proposed changes to succeed. This section will address the framework and the relationship to meaningful PD.

### ***Professional Development and Predictors of Effectiveness***

PD is most successful when it is a consistently documented system of knowledge that is based on how to support teachers as they develop new expertise and skills (Ventista & Brown, 2020). PDs for teachers is a cornerstone of educational success,

fostering an environment of continuous growth and improvement. One key factor contributing to its success is the alignment between PD initiatives and the evolving needs of both educators and students. Effective PD recognizes that teaching is a dynamic profession influenced by pedagogy, technology, and changes in student demographics. As such, programs that stay attuned to these shifts and provide targeted support enable teachers to enhance their skills, stay current, and adapt their practices to best meet the diverse needs of their students.

Successful efforts are also facilitated when trainers ensure that the training is feasible to fit in the teachers' classroom, help teachers understand how the new practice differs from what they were doing in the past, provide coaches and mentors, and when the trainers maintain an open line of communication with school personnel (Lindsey et al., 2019). Providing teachers with concrete examples of how a new theory, principle, or instructional practice relates to their students and unique circumstances cannot be overstated. For any educational strategy to be effective, teachers must perceive its relevance to their specific teaching context (Munna & Kalam, 2021). When teachers can see how a new approach aligns with the needs of their students and the challenges they face, it enhances the likelihood of meaningful change. Moreover, adapting a new strategy to suit individual needs is crucial. When teachers tailor a strategy to fit their particular classroom dynamics, they make it more relevant and develop a sense of ownership. This sense of ownership is a powerful motivator that fosters sustained use of the strategy in their classrooms. It transforms the strategy from a theoretical concept to a practical, integral component of their teaching toolkit, ultimately contributing to positive and



lasting changes in instructional practices.

Successful PD also engages teachers in meaningful, collaborative learning experiences.

Opportunities for teachers to collaborate with peers, share insights, and exchange best practices create a supportive community of practice. This collaborative aspect not only builds a sense of camaraderie but also allows teachers to draw on the collective wisdom of their colleagues, fostering a culture of shared responsibility for student success.

Further, incorporating practical, hands-on strategies in PD initiatives enhances their effectiveness. Teachers benefit most when directly applying what they learn to their classrooms. Workshops, seminars, and training sessions that offer concrete, applicable strategies empower teachers to implement new approaches immediately, leading to more tangible and immediate positive outcomes in student learning.

Lastly, successful PD recognizes the importance of ongoing reflection and feedback. Creating a culture that encourages teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and seek constructive feedback contributes to continuous improvement. This reflective approach allows educators to refine their skills, identify areas for growth, and make informed adjustments to their teaching methods. In essence, the success of PDs for teachers lies in its adaptability, collaboration, practicality, and the promotion of reflective practices. When these elements are woven into professional growth initiatives, teachers are better equipped to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of education, ultimately benefiting the students they serve.

### ***Professional Development and Barriers to Success***

PDs for teachers is intended to enhance their skills, keep them updated on

educational trends, and ultimately improve student learning outcomes. Despite these intentions, several factors can contribute to the ineffectiveness of such initiatives. Three primary barriers that hinder the success of teachers' professional learning include a lack of time, the devaluing of the proposed change, and the presence of a fixed mindset (Chuckry, 2019, p. 36). Teachers, already consumed by the demands of lesson preparation, grading, and classroom management, often find it difficult to dedicate time for their growth. They may be hesitant to participate in professional learning when they must organize time and determine if it will be enough to implement the proposed changes effectively (Affouneh et al., 2020).

The one-size-fits-all approach adopted by some PD programs is a challenge that can cause teachers not to value the proposed change. Teachers have diverse needs, experiences, and classroom environments, making a uniform training program inadequate for addressing their specific requirements. When PD fails to consider the individualized nature of teaching, educators may find it irrelevant or difficult to apply in their unique contexts. When teachers attend PD sessions that they do not feel are meaningful or relevant, they can often return to methods that feel most comfortable instead of the proposed change (Chuckry, 2019; Guiteriez & Heui-Baik, 2017). A lack of teacher input and collaboration can contribute to the ineffectiveness of PD. When educators are not actively involved in shaping the content and structure of training sessions, they may perceive the material as disconnected from their daily challenges and needs. In turn, this disengagement can undermine the effectiveness of the program.

Lastly, a barrier to PD is the fixed mindset of teachers. A fixed mindset is the

belief that personal abilities cannot be changed (Li & Bates, 2019). Teachers with a fixed mindset often lack awareness, which can interfere with their ability to acquire new skills or be open to the changes that the PD is suggesting. The effectiveness of PD for teachers is contingent on addressing the individualized needs of educators, providing sustained support, ensuring practical applicability, and promoting collaborative learning environments. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is crucial for optimizing the impact of PDs on developing a teacher growth mindset and, ultimately, student success.

### **Effective Implementation of PBIS**

PBIS is a multi-tiered framework implemented in more than 21,000 schools throughout the United States (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2020). When combined with social-emotional learning modules, teachers have found that student outcomes improved when they learned effective ways to internalize and externalize behaviors (Oliveira et al., 2021). The effectiveness of the PBIS framework hinges significantly on the active engagement and commitment of school stakeholders who play pivotal roles in implementing procedures and employing data-based decision-making strategies to reach students effectively. This reliance places a substantial responsibility on school administrators, teachers, and other personnel involved in schoolwide programming, including school psychologists. These individuals are responsible for PBIS implementation and juggle various other crucial roles such as instruction and curriculum development, parent and community involvement, lesson planning, and other essential functions vital for the school's overall functioning (Rossi, 2017 ;Von der Embse et al., 2022).

Given the multifaceted responsibilities of school personnel, ensuring they possess the requisite knowledge and resources to implement PBIS with fidelity is imperative. Striking a delicate balance between these daily responsibilities and implementing PBIS effectively is critical for the program's success. This necessitates ongoing support, PD opportunities, and accessible resources to empower school personnel to navigate these responsibilities effectively and contribute to the sustained success of the PBIS framework in the school environment (Kern et al., 2022; Rossi, 2017). Certainly, school administrators are crucial in successfully implementing PBIS with fidelity within their schools. Their provision of support and buy-in significantly influences the efficacy and commitment of other school stakeholders. The impact of administrators is felt across various stages, from the initial exploration of PBIS in the school to the maintenance phase. In the early stages, administrators can foster a positive environment for PBIS by actively promoting its exploration and understanding among staff. Clear communication of the program's objectives, benefits, and expectations sets the stage for a successful implementation. Administrators can allocate human and material resources to facilitate the integration of PBIS into the school's culture.

As the program progresses, administrators play a pivotal role in maintaining momentum. Their continued support, visible commitment, and involvement in ongoing PD signal the enduring importance of PBIS to the entire school community. This sustained engagement helps embed PBIS practices into the school's fabric, ensuring its ongoing success and impact on student behavior and well-being (Robert, 2020). The absence of support or changes in administration can pose significant challenges to the

continuity of PBIS implementation. A lack of understanding and buy-in, coupled with an emphasis on punitive disciplinary measures, can detrimentally impact positive student outcomes and the overall climate within the school. Cultivating buy-in and fostering a positive climate necessitates ongoing efforts, including consistent communication, to comprehend school stakeholders' perceptions of how the program is functioning.

Regular and transparent communication is instrumental in addressing concerns, gathering feedback, and ensuring that the goals related to PBIS align with the evolving needs of the school community. By actively seeking input and sharing progress updates, administrators can create an inclusive and collaborative environment that promotes a shared understanding of the program's purpose and benefits.

### **Meaningful Professional Development for PBIS**

While most teachers are offered some form of PD throughout the school year, teachers have reported that the PD did not lead to significant positive changes because the teachers did not find the experiences to be meaningful or useful (McKeown et al., 2019). Meaningful PD for PBIS is essential for cultivating a school culture that fosters positive behavior and enhances the learning environment. In the context of PBIS, meaningful development goes beyond conventional workshops, aiming to empower educators with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the framework effectively. Meaningful guidance for PBIS can enhance successful outcomes and sustainability of PBIS implementation (Gagnon et al., 2020). Unlike generic workshops or one-size-fits-all training sessions, meaningful PD is tailored to teachers' specific needs and aspirations. It goes beyond mere compliance and strives to ignite a passion for lifelong learning. At its

core, meaningful PD is characterized by relevance. It directly addresses the challenges and opportunities educators face in their classrooms, aligning with the goals of both individual teachers and the broader educational institution (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2020). By acknowledging the diverse backgrounds, teaching styles, and subject areas, meaningful development initiatives provide teachers with practical strategies to immediately integrate into their pedagogical practices.

With meaningful PD, school personnel acquire knowledge about PBIS and learn how to engage with the framework and implement it with fidelity (Lewis et al., 2016; Terrell & Cho, 2023). All teachers should feel that the PD provides hands-on experiences and real-world applications, key elements of meaningful PBIS PD. Educators benefit from opportunities to apply PBIS strategies in their classrooms, receive feedback from peers or mentors, and refine their approaches based on practical experience (McIntosh et al., 2021). This experiential learning approach ensures that PBIS is not just a theoretical concept but a living, breathing framework that positively influences daily interactions and behavior within the school environment.

School leaders and facilitators are crucial in fostering meaningful PD. They should empower educators by providing the necessary tools and knowledge to implement PBIS effectively (Terrell & Cho, 2023). Meaningful PD can be achieved by ensuring that PD is tailored to the school's specific needs and context. Workshops and training sessions should be interactive and engaging. The PD facilitator should encourage active participation through discussions, case studies, role-playing, and hands-on activities (Saunders et al., 2020). Engaging participants enhances understanding and promotes

applying PBIS strategies in real-world scenarios. Meaningful PD should utilize practical examples and case studies relevant to the school environment. Real-world scenarios help educators grasp the application of PBIS principles in various situations they might encounter in their daily interactions with students (Saunders et al., 2020).

Meaningful PD provides a continuous support system that reinforces the application of PBIS strategies. It allows staff to access follow-up workshops, regular check-ins, or opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share their experiences. Facilitating meaningful PD fosters collaborative learning communities within the school and encourages teachers and staff to share insights, challenges, and successes related to PBIS (Terrell & Cho, 2023). Collaborative learning communities create a supportive environment and build a sense of shared responsibility for the framework's success. Lastly, meaningful PD for PBIS should be opportunities for all educators to share feedback, discuss challenges, and suggest improvements to empower all teachers and create a culture of continuous improvement (Terrell & Cho, 2023).

### **Project Description**

This project is based on the need to provide training to share the perceptions of special education teachers implementing PBIS with their SWDs to the district's PBIS Leadership team. The results of this study found that some special education teachers felt excluded from the PBIS planning process, felt that their students did not benefit from PBIS as it is currently set up, and expressed a need for differentiation of the framework so that their students could fully participate and benefit from the rewards. Based on the findings, a three-day meaningful PD was developed to share the study results and to

develop ways that the framework could be differentiated so that all students and teachers could be fully engaged in PBIS at their school.

*A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens* is a three-day training for district PBIS leaders and individual elementary and middle school PBIS teams. It was designed to share study results, support PBIS implementation, and develop ways to differentiate the curriculum effectively. The main purpose of PBIS is to improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students by providing a proactive and systematic approach to teaching and reinforcing positive behavior (Center on PBIS, 2023). PBIS aims to create a positive and inclusive school environment by emphasizing proactive strategies, reinforcing positive behaviors, maintaining consistency, using data for decision-making, providing tiered support, fostering collaboration, and being culturally responsive (Center on PBIS, 2023). The proposed PD must be meaningful to the target audience. The meaningful PD will occur for three days during the district pre-planning week. The training will take place from July 25 to July 27 and will be offered to the district's PBIS leadership team and individual school PBIS teams.

Day one of the training will focus on an overview of PBIS, including major components, PBIS expectations, and ways to secure staff buy-in. Day one of the training will also review the study results and what that could mean for the district. Day two of the training will focus on team discussion on ways to promote inclusion for all staff and barriers to successful PBIS implementation. Day three of the training will focus on Group projects and working through pre-made scenarios related to differentiating PBIS rewards, activities, and ways to reward SWDs.



All sessions will begin at 8:30 a.m. and begin with breakfast from a community partner. During breakfast, the participants will be welcomed and participate in a check-in to answer any pressing questions and to join groups that the participants will be in for the remainder of the training. Sessions will begin at 10:15 a.m. on Day one and three and at 9:00 a.m. on Day two. Every session is designed to actively engage participants and immerse them in the perspectives of special education teachers. It provides opportunities for new learning, modeling, and role-playing through scenarios. Participants are encouraged to review new information and pose questions based on their concerns. The PD sessions foster active team collaboration, prompting participants to share, reflect, and create without judgment. Each session concludes with a 30-minute small group question-and-answer segment to further support participants, catering to those who may require additional assistance or have individual inquiries.

### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

All necessary materials and equipment for each session will be uniformly provided, with a laptop and Smartboard set up by the school. Participants will be supplied with index cards to write reflective comments on their PBIS implementation before the ongoing PD, placing them in a designated Reflection box. The room will have posted notes, chart paper, markers, and tape for group activities.

Support for PBIS implementation will take various forms. Human support is integral, with the trainer leading the “*A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens*” sessions. While school administrators are not mandatory attendees, an invitation to the PD is extended to demonstrate unity. District PBIS trainers will participate, receiving PD

materials to train faculty and staff effectively for program implementation. They will further disseminate information to their assigned schools, ensuring widespread understanding. All individual school PBIS team members are mandated to attend the training. Financial support is unnecessary, as PD days are already incorporated into the district calendar. The school year is structured into quarters, with PD offered during the district's pre-planning schedule, eliminating the need for additional financial allocations.

### **Potential Barriers**

Potential barriers to the implementation of the meaningful PD for *A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens* PBIS training are resistance to change; because this training will be offered to PBIS leadership staff and PBIS teams, they may be resistant to adopting new methods of implementing PBIS from someone who is not also on the leadership team. If they have been accustomed to a particular way of managing PBIS with schools, this information may not be positively received; overcoming resistance to change is crucial for ensuring the PD is successful.

Another potential barrier is a lack of follow-up, though PD should not be a one-time event; this training would only occur during the set time and would require district PBIS leadership to expound on the training and offer it to their schools and teams. Without ongoing support and follow-up, there may be a struggle to implement new strategies or concepts in their classrooms, leading to a lack of sustained impact.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

*A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens*: A comprehensive three-day training program is scheduled to take place during the pre-planning days indicated on the

school calendar, from July 25 to July 27, 2024. This extensive training will encompass full-day sessions, incorporating diverse instructional elements. Each day will feature a structured agenda comprising presentations, interactive open-sharing sessions, team activities, in-depth discussions, and opportunities for participant reflections. The schedule is thoughtfully designed, with breaks and a dedicated one-hour lunch period included each day to facilitate an immersive and effective learning experience.

Following the 3:00 discussion and reflection segment, participants will summarize, allowing for questions, answers, and a comprehensive survey evaluation to gather feedback on the day’s training. This approach aims to provide a detailed and thorough exploration of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) within the specific context of Special Education, fostering a deeper understanding and meaningful engagement among participants.

**Table 7**

*PBIS Meaningful Professional Development Implementation and Timetable*

Dates	8:30-10:00	10:00-10:15	10:15-12:00	1:00-2:30	2:30-3:00	3:30-4:00
July 25, 2024	Welcome Assign teams Open share	BREAK	PBIS overview— major components, securing staff, buy-in	Study results— What does this mean?	Discussion/Reflections	Q&A
July 26, 2024	Welcome Team discussion	BREAK	Barriers to successful implementation Open share	Ways to promote inclusion for all staff	Discussion/Reflections	Q&A
July 27, 2024	Welcome Introduce scenario activity	BREAK	Scenario group activity Present to group	Scenario activity pt. 2 Present to group	Discussion/Reflections	Q&A

**Project Evaluation Plan**

The evaluation process is intricately designed to precisely cater to the audience’s

specific needs. It is imperative that the training aligns effectively with the objectives and requirements of participants to ensure the successful implementation of PBIS. Moreover, the evaluation is a valuable tool to enlighten faculty and staff about their unique training needs, utilizing a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor). The evaluations are included in the project (Appendix A). The evaluation delves into specifics, examining activities related to both classroom strategies and school-wide strategies.

The study's findings underscore a prevailing gap in understanding the perspectives of special education teachers required to implement PBIS with their SWDs, highlighting the necessity for more targeted and focused training initiatives. After each evaluation, participants are encouraged to contribute suggestions for refining current and future PD activities. This commitment to feedback underscores the ongoing effort to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the training sessions. The overarching goal is to build the capacity of the PBIS Leadership teams and school PBIS teams directly involved in improving student outcomes. PBIS emphasizes that the expertise in training lies with the educators implementing the program. Creating meaningful PD activities is pivotal in cultivating expertise among diverse participants.

### **Project Implications**

The study seeks to inform the district PBIS leadership team and school PBIS teams about the perspectives of special education teachers required to implement PBIS with their SWDs. Implications for change can benefit the local school and district levels and potentially positively impact special education staff and students.

## **District Wide Implications**

Implementing meaningful PD on PBIS at the district level can have significant implications for leadership, educators, and students. PBIS is a framework that emphasizes a proactive and positive approach to school-wide behavior management. Meaningful PD in PBIS can lead to several district-wide benefits. Consistent implementation across the district: if all PBIS leaders and teams receive training on the perspectives of special education teachers and ways to differentiate the framework, it could ensure a consistent approach to behavior management across all schools in the district. Consistency enhances the effectiveness of PBIS and creates a unified approach to behavior expectations and interventions (Gage et al., 2020). Another district-wide implication of the project is its full alignment with state and federal initiatives. Many states and federal education agencies recognize the effectiveness of PBIS and may provide support or incentives for its implementation. This three-day PD will be offered to the leadership team responsible for monitoring how PBIS is implemented to ensure alignment with these initiatives and compliance with relevant regulations. Lastly, Continuous improvement encourages educators to regularly assess and refine their PBIS strategies based on feedback and outcomes. The district can adapt and evolve its approach to PBIS to meet the changing needs of students and the community. Meaningful PD on PBIS at the district level can lead to positive outcomes, including improved behavior, enhanced school climate, increased student success, and a more positive overall educational experience. Prioritizing ongoing support and training is essential to implementing district PBIS practices successfully.

### **Long-Term Benefits**

Implementing meaningful PD sessions for the PBIS leadership team and school PBIS teams in this study could positively impact PBIS implementation at schools. When training is meaningful, targeted, and sustained, long-term benefits include improved teaching practices, increased job satisfaction, and retention of effective teachers. Meaningful PD helps educators stay current with the latest research, methodologies, and technologies in education. This ongoing learning allows them to refine and update their teaching practices, leading to more effective and engaging instruction over time. Meaningful PD helps participants enhance their skills and adopt effective instructional strategies. This change can ultimately positively impact student learning outcomes as students in classrooms with well-trained and continually developing teachers tend to perform better academically and behaviorally (Gage et al., 2020). Lastly, teachers who feel supported by leadership and staff participating in meaningful PD are more likely to experience job satisfaction. When educators feel they are heard and valued and their concerns matter, it can contribute to a sense of fulfillment and professional accomplishment.

### **Conclusion**

In Section 3, I described *A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens. Three days of meaningful PD* were offered to the district PBIS leadership and school PBIS teams. The three-day meaningful PD will provide insight into the perspectives of special education teachers required to implement PBIS with their SWDs and develop ways to differentiate the framework, rewards, and language so all students can benefit from the

PBIS initiative. A literature review associated with the importance of meaningful PD was completed. The project implementation, evaluation, and district and long-term implications regarding the importance of meaning PD were also discussed. Section 4 reflects on the research that led to the project, strengths, limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, analysis of self as scholar, practitioner, and project developer, suggestions for future research, and any conclusions that can be made based on this body of work.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

In research and project development, it is inevitable to encounter both strengths and limitations. This project study specifically concentrated on undertaking valid and reliable research within a constrained timeframe, aiming to yield valuable insights into the functionality and operations of a program integral to the school's success. The robustness of this project is underscored by the outcomes derived from a case study that delves into teachers' perceptions of implementing PBIS with their SWDs. The project's strength lies in its ability to navigate the challenges of time constraints while delivering research that maintains validity and reliability. Despite the compressed timeline, the study successfully provides a nuanced understanding of the PBIS program's dynamics within the school setting. Using a basic qualitative study approach adds depth and richness to the findings, capturing the nuanced perspectives of teachers involved in the program.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations inherent in the abbreviated duration of the research. The condensed timeline may have constrained the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis. As such, while the insights gained are valuable, they may be representative of a snapshot rather than a comprehensive view of the program's intricacies. In conclusion, the project's strength lies in its adept handling of time constraints and ability to generate meaningful insights from a focused case study. Recognizing these strengths and limitations is crucial for comprehensively understanding the project's scope and implications.



## **Project Strengths**

The project's success was built on the validity and reliability of the findings, obtained through a triangulation of data collected from in-depth interviews with study participants. After thoroughly examining and compiling data from multiple sources, four distinct themes surfaced as the main focus of the analysis. Each theme was carefully dissected and presented, providing a comprehensive understanding of the research. The themes addressed why elementary and middle school teachers were not implementing PBIS strategies with their SWDs and what the teachers' perceptions were when attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs:

- Theme 1: There is a lack of consistency and buy-in.
- Theme 2: There are concerns regarding the cognitive ability of some of the student population and their ability to understand PBIS as it is currently presented.
- Theme 3: There are concerns that some students do not fully understand PBIS or its tenets.
- Theme 4: There is a need for a modified PBIS curriculum that is more inclusive of SWDs.

The project was created to ensure that district PBIS leadership is aware of the perceptions of special education teachers attempting to implement the framework with their SWDs. In order to implement a PD that helps educators grow professionally, the PD must be meaningful and tailored to their needs, motivations, and focuses (Sancar et al., 2021). Meaningful PD was designed to train district PBIS leadership staff and individual

school PBIS teams. The training is scheduled for pre-planning when all required PD sessions occur throughout the district. The project has the support of the district administration, and it was a strength that the PBIS administrative team was interested in understanding the perceptions of special education teachers in the district. Another strength of this study is the potential to make several positive changes to the current district PBIS framework that adds to the inclusion of SWDs and their ability to participate in the framework fully.

### **Project Limitations**

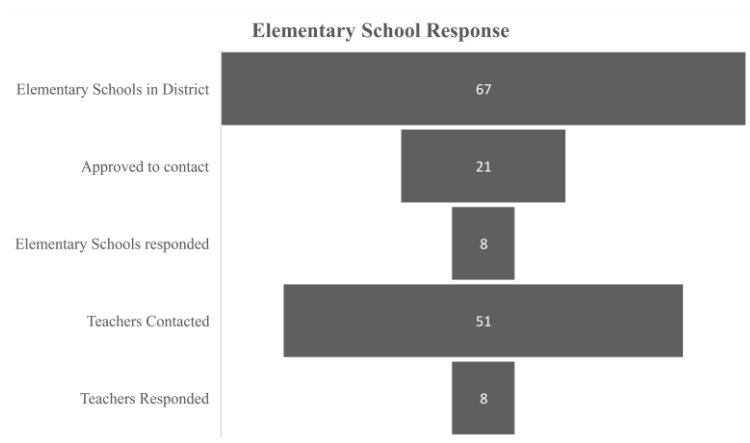
The project limitations are related to how information was obtained for the study. The district process for obtaining permission to conduct the study requires the researcher first to seek permission from the administration of the individual schools. During this initial process, some administrators did not respond to the invitation, limiting the number of special education teachers participating in the study. The district consists of 67 elementary and 25 middle schools; I was only approved to recruit from 21 elementary and 18 middle schools, and from that number, only eight elementary and one middle school administrative teams granted permission for the study to be conducted at their school. This limited my access to more special education teachers in the district.

After gaining approval from an already limited data pool, several teachers did not respond to any communication asking them to participate in the study. I initially looked to interview 15-20 special education teachers; this number was not feasible for this study due to the lack of response and time needed to analyze the data. This project ultimately is limited in generalizing the study results due to a lack of response to the initial and follow-

up invitations (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).

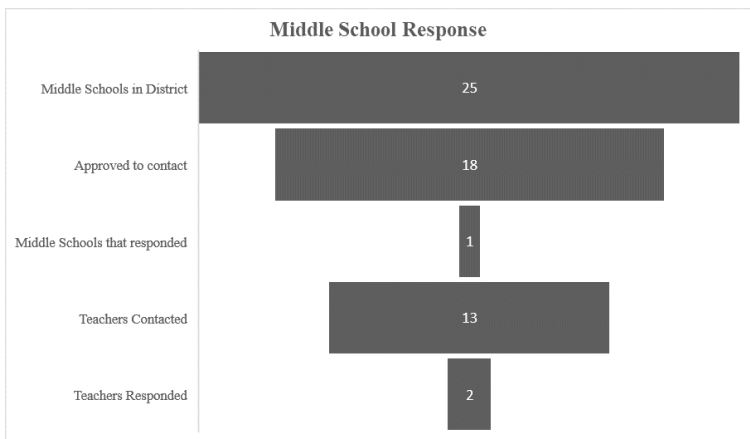
**Figure 3**

*Elementary School Participation Breakdown*



**Figure 4**

*Middle School Participation Breakdown*



**Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

An alternative approach to data collection for this study would be to add more

participants from all school levels (including high school teachers). Including all teachers who work with SWDs could have increased the participant pool and the information obtained from the research. A larger sample size is often considered essential for achieving higher statistical power in research, which refers to the ability to accurately detect true effects or relationships (Andrade, 2020). With a larger sample, researchers are better equipped to make more precise estimates and detect smaller but significant effects that may be missed with a smaller sample size (Lakens, 2022). A larger sample can greatly enhance the external validity of research findings. Ensuring that the sample is representative of the target population makes the results more generalizable, meaning they can be confidently applied to a broader population or context. A larger sample also reduces sampling error caused by natural variation within a population and can lead to more precise estimates and narrower confidence intervals, ultimately making the findings more reliable and increasing confidence in the results (Andrade, 2020).

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, Leadership, and Change**

Engaging in this research has been a transformative experience for me, allowing me to grow and develop as a scholar, professional, program evaluator, and change leader. As I developed the project and crafted the evaluation survey, I gained valuable insight into the role of project developers and the skills required to excel in this position. Moreover, this entire experience has given me a comprehensive understanding of the abilities and knowledge needed to drive organizational change effectively. The challenges and triumphs of this endeavor have shaped me into a more well-rounded and capable individual, ready to take on future endeavors with confidence and expertise.

## **Scholarship**

Throughout this project, I have cultivated newfound skills in scholarly educational decisions. Immersing myself in this research and designing this project has instilled in me the importance of adopting a more scholarly approach to decision-making. I have acquired a heightened appreciation for the review and analysis of historical and contemporary literature, recognizing the role in shaping well-informed choices. Further, gathering data for this project was an intricate process, requiring me to learn interviewing techniques. As I delved into data analysis, I had to set aside my personal opinions and approach each task as a meticulous researcher, carefully utilizing data to inform my decisions. The analysis phase was also challenging as I had to decipher coding patterns and establish relationships between words and themes. It was a constant learning process, honing my skills in effectively presenting patterns and relationships that aligned with my research questions. As a research-practitioner, I have cultivated essential scholarly abilities to develop a research-based framework, evaluate programs, and utilize data to make informed decisions about future research projects to create meaningful change.

## **Project Development and Evaluation**

As a scholar-practitioner, I embarked on the challenging task of crafting a project and designing an evaluation instrument. This was a rewarding learning experience—one that I will always cherish. It required thoughtful consideration to conceive a project of both substance and feasibility. I approached this responsibility knowing the significance of creating something meaningful yet practical and achievable. Every step was taken with great care and deliberation, showcasing my dedication to my work's scholarly and

practical aspects. This conscientious effort is a testament to my commitment to the undertaking, reflecting my deep understanding of its importance and potential impact.

### **Analysis of Self as a Scholar**

As a scholar in the field of education, introspection is necessary to truly understand one's role and contributions to the academic community. This deep self-analysis requires thoroughly examining personal experiences, beliefs, and scholarly achievements. Looking back on my journey towards becoming a scholar, I reflect on the defining moments that shaped my perspective and approach to research. I also consider the development of my personal philosophy of education and how it has evolved. I analyze the impact of my scholarly activities on my personal and professional growth, recognizing how they have enriched my understanding of education. As for my research, I delve into the topics I have explored and the methodologies I have employed. Each study holds its own significance within the larger body of knowledge, and I carefully assess how my findings can positively contribute to the field of education. In particular, I am interested in how my research can influence practices and policies related to implementing PBIS with SWDs.

In addition to my research, I reflect on my teaching and learning approach. My instructional methods are guided by certain principles that align with current educational theories and practices. As I analyze data and draw conclusions from my research, I consider how these findings contribute to the broader discourse surrounding education. As for my personal academic growth, I thoroughly analyze my unwavering commitment to ongoing development within the niche of PBIS and SWDs. Reflecting on my own

challenges while attempting to implement PBIS with SWDs, I consider discussions and insights shared with colleagues who have faced similar obstacles. These experiences have greatly enhanced my knowledge, research skills, and overall effectiveness as a student completing research in this specialized area.

As I embark on this final reflection, I am reminded of the countless challenges that have shaped my journey. The trials and obstacles I have faced have tested my resilience and determination, leading to personal and professional growth. From implementing various strategies to overcome these challenges, I have gained invaluable insights and honed my skills as an educator. These experiences have also shifted my perspectives and approaches, allowing me to understand better and meet the diverse needs of learners. Looking towards the future, I outline my aspirations as a scholar in education - the areas I wish to explore deeper, the impact I hope to make, and the continuous growth and evolution I strive for in my role as an educator. My research focuses on providing valuable insights into implementing PBIS effectively with SWDs. By delving into this topic, I aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how these interventions can be tailored to meet the unique needs of diverse learners. Shedding light on best practices and potential challenges, my research seeks to inform educators, policymakers, and researchers alike, creating an environment that fosters positive behavior and academic success for all students.

### **Analysis of Self as a Practitioner**

Through my doctoral journey, I have evolved into a scholar-practitioner - no longer just a passive recipient of knowledge but an active agent of change. My focus now

extends beyond consuming information to include implementing it in practice. My goal is to be a catalyst for social progress and improve the lives of individuals, organizations, and my community. This project will serve as the foundation for my professional work, allowing me to utilize scholarly research to enhance my classroom practices. With my skills in research and analysis, I am equipped to effectively address issues my peers may experience with implementing PBIS with SWDs and develop strategies to achieve desired outcomes. Whether identifying problems or seeking solutions, I am adept at utilizing evidence-based approaches and precise language in all professional interactions - from correspondence with staff, colleagues, parents, and stakeholders.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

As I delved into the process of creating a project based on scholarly research in a local school setting, I quickly realized the importance of attention to detail and perseverance. The doctoral process demanded dedication, flexibility, and an ability to overcome obstacles, which I developed through this project. Every project component required careful organization and execution, as the success and progress relied heavily on my efforts. The program checklist was a valuable tool for prioritizing tasks and minimizing errors. Each suggested revision pushed me to refine my work further and pay close attention to detail. Patience and compromise were crucial in navigating challenges and working in small incremental steps helped me stay productive and focused amidst distractions. Despite obstacles along the way, I persevered and emerged triumphant in completing this project.



## **Leadership and Change**

Prior to embarking on this project, I had never considered myself a leader or someone capable of instigating significant change within my organization. However, upon completion, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that I possess the qualities of a leader and have the ability to bring about positive transformations in my workplace. This project pushed me out of my comfort zone as I met with colleagues whom I did not previously know and conducted interviews to gather valuable insights. As an introverted individual, speaking in front of large groups with unfamiliar faces does not come naturally to me. This project challenged me to go beyond my comfort level as I collaborated with other educators to discuss the challenges they faced in implementing PBIS strategies with their students. It was a rewarding experience that allowed me to grow both personally and professionally as a leader.

## **Reflections of the Importance of Work**

As I reflect on the culmination of this extensive body of work, what resonates most is the pressing need for a more scholarly approach in a world constantly seeking social change. My journey towards obtaining my doctorate has been a continuous process of building upon my knowledge and skills. From my initial course to this final chapter, I have undergone immense personal growth in preparing myself for advanced work. The combination of theoretical coursework and practical application within my school has allowed me to engage in this dissertation journey actively. I have gained invaluable insight that equips me with the tools to advocate for differentiated PBIS strategies to include students with disabilities fully. This journey has also illuminated the challenges

faced by special education teachers when implementing PBIS without proper support and guidance on adapting rewards to meet their students' individual needs.

I now possess an unwavering passion for finding ways to enhance PBIS for all students. Completing this study has connected me with like-minded teachers who share a desire to improve upon the current implementation of PBIS. Through this project-based study, my dedication to promoting social change has evolved to new heights. My determination to create a meaningful impact has only grown stronger. It is crucial for me to continue striving towards bringing about change in all aspects, particularly in ensuring that educators effectively utilize PBIS and inclusively benefit all students, regardless of their cognitive abilities.

As I look back on the pressing need for meaningful PD sessions for leaders and all district-level agents of change, I am struck by its powerful impact on improving teaching practices and ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes. These meaningful PD sessions are key to creating a dynamic, adaptive educational environment that fosters growth and progress. By moving away from generic "sit and get" workshops, districts can cultivate lifelong learners and develop a collaborative working environment that increases student achievement. As I continue on my journey towards advocating for special education teachers, I am determined to do more for students with disabilities by ensuring they have a greater experience with PBIS. Unfortunately, students with disabilities are often subject to exclusionary and reactive disciplinary practices at higher rates than their peers without disabilities. The education system continues to struggle with overrepresenting students with disabilities in disciplinary consequences, such as

office discipline referrals and in-school suspensions (Hurwitz et al., 2021).

In response, Horner and Sugai (2021) have identified four key components of implementing PBIS to support all students, including those with disabilities, in the classroom: (1) prioritizing prevention, (2) incorporating PBIS practices into daily classroom routines, (3) recognizing that tier 1 strategies benefit all students, and (4) ensuring that all students, without exception, are included in PBIS implementation. It is crucial for teachers to receive training on how to tailor PBIS to meet the diverse needs of their students so that everyone can fully participate in the framework and reap its benefits.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The 3-day PD, “*A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED lens,*” was a meaningful and insightful experience for district PBIS leadership. Perceptions of participating teachers and their impact on consistency in implementing the PBIS framework was assessed in this study. The PD also served as a platform for leaders to collaborate and brainstorm strategies for differentiating the current framework, aiming to increase fidelity among special education teachers. This basic qualitative study aimed to shed light on the reasons why some special education teachers were not implementing the framework with their students despite being required to do so. Appendix A includes a detailed outline of the PD, specifically designed to address the problem identified at the study site and based on data findings from the sample site. Through “*A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED lens,*” stakeholders can gain the knowledge and skills necessary for implementing systematic change that will ultimately increase teacher participation

and student inclusion within the district-wide framework.

According to the Center on PBIS, approximately 27,000 schools across the United States have been trained to implement the PBIS framework. Concerning issues arise when considering why teachers are not consistently implementing PBIS with their SWDs. One significant finding suggests that there is inadequate support for modifying or differentiating the PBIS framework for SWDs. While matrices outline expected behaviors and rules, there is little written guidance on effectively implementing PBIS for students with significant cognitive deficits and on creating alternative rewards for students who may struggle with sensory issues or do not find the offered rewards motivating. As a result, some students may be unable to fully participate in PBIS despite their efforts to earn rewards, highlighting the need for differentiation within the framework.

Future research opportunities could involve a comprehensive and in-depth study focused on identifying effective methods for adapting the PBIS framework specifically for students with disabilities. This could include conducting qualitative observations of teachers' classroom practices and providing personalized guidance on how to ensure all students, regardless of their abilities, can fully participate in PBIS. Further implications for future practice would be to investigate the effectiveness of promoting collaboration among general education teachers, special education teachers, support staff, and administrators to ensure a cohesive and consistent implementation of PBIS strategies. It is crucial to tailor behavioral expectations and reinforcement strategies to accommodate the individual abilities and challenges of students with disabilities while ensuring that

goals are attainable and realistic.

Ongoing training should be provided for all staff members, including teachers, administrators, and support staff, on effectively incorporating students with disabilities into the PBIS framework. Collecting and analyzing student behavior data, specifically those related to students with disabilities, is essential in refining and adjusting PBIS strategies to meet each student's unique needs. It is important to remain mindful of any sensory sensitivities and make necessary environmental adjustments to create a more comfortable setting for students with sensory processing challenges. Visual supports such as schedules, social stories, and cues can be implemented to help students with disabilities better understand expectations and navigate the school environment. Creating a positive peer environment can also greatly benefit students with disabilities by implementing peer support programs or buddy systems. Encouraging peer modeling and mentoring can effectively aid in teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors among students. Flexibility in reinforcement systems is essential when considering the diverse needs of students with disabilities; rewards and recognition should be differentiated based on individual preferences and motivations. Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of PBIS strategies for students with disabilities is crucial, and being prepared to make necessary adaptations to meet their needs better is vital for their success within the PBIS framework.

With careful implementation and thoughtful planning, schools can cultivate a truly inclusive PBIS framework that caters to the diverse needs of students with disabilities while fostering positive behavior for all students. By actively incorporating

these strategies, educators can create an environment where every student feels valued and supported, paving the way for successful academic and personal growth.

### **Conclusion**

Findings from this basic qualitative study can be used to help school districts modify the PBIS framework to meet the needs of SWDs. When implementing the framework, it is important to provide teachers with ways to differentiate PBIS to meet their students' individual needs. District leaders must be actively engaged in understanding the teachers' perspectives that are required to implement the framework with their students. PBIS was designed to be inclusive of all students but the lack of consistency or support on effect modification methods impacts overall fidelity and student success from the framework.

In order to truly enact change, meaningful PD must be offered to district PBIS leaders. These individuals are responsible for initiating a shift in perspective for special education teachers, helping them navigate the challenges of implementing this framework with their SWDs. Ongoing PD is crucial for understanding how to differentiate the PBIS framework and modify rewards to include all students. The *A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED lens* training was specifically developed to provide district PBIS leaders with valuable insights into special education teachers' perceptions. Often, these teachers may not feel that their concerns are important enough to discuss or that their voices will be heard. We can improve teacher participation and foster full student inclusion by offering a safe space to share their challenges with consistently implementing PBIS with SWDs. These developments have the potential to inspire social

change not only within the study school but also within the larger local community. By preparing teachers to support all students effectively, regardless of their disability, we can ensure that everyone benefits from the PBIS framework.

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## Appendix A: The Project

### **Meaningful Three-Day Professional Development for District PBIS Leadership and School PBIS Teams**

#### **Purpose**

This comprehensive PD program will be specifically tailored for the district's PBIS leadership staff, providing them with a unique opportunity to gain invaluable insight into the perspectives of special education teachers concerning PBIS. The purpose of the Through A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED lens project is to establish an open line of communication between district leaders and special education teachers, fostering collaboration and understanding. Participants will develop a deeper understanding of special education teachers' perspectives and create a strategic plan to address any concerns and ensure that students with disabilities are fully integrated into the PBIS framework, allowing them to reap the benefits of this evidence-based initiative.

#### **Rationale**

The importance of involving teachers in implementing a fidelity framework cannot be underestimated (Macy & Wheeler, 2020). As such, special education teachers' perspectives should not be overlooked when devising a plan to address concerns regarding PBIS. Viewpoints of elementary and middle school special education teachers who have experience implementing PBIS for SWDs are the main focus of this study. The results reveal that educators feel there is a lack of consistency stemming from higher levels of administration that impacts the effectiveness of PBIS. They believe their students are not benefitting from PBIS due to their cognitive abilities and call for a

modified version of the framework to better suit their needs. This PD aims to bring awareness to the district PBIS leadership team about the concerns of special education teachers and equip them with the necessary skills to successfully implement PBIS with SWDs. While this PD may not directly benefit teachers, it will ultimately lead to improved training and implementation efforts within schools. Buy-in is essential when all professionals are involved in the planning and decision-making process (Ryan & Baker, 2020). By ensuring that special education teachers feel heard and valued and that their students are specifically targeted for PBIS, we can increase the likelihood of a consistent and effective implementation from all teachers in our schools.

### **Professional Development Goals**

- Provide meaningful professional development.
- Inform district-level leadership of the perceptions of special education teachers implementing PBIS with SWDs.
- Consistently offering meaningful professional development training to enhance skills and knowledge.
- Facilitating open and continuous communication, diligent monitoring, and hands-on demonstration of PBIS strategies for all tiers - Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3.
- Cultivating strong connections between all stakeholders involved in the PBIS program to foster a supportive environment.
- Educating administrators, teachers, and staff on effective ways to differentiate the PBIS framework to promote inclusion.

- Equipping administrators, teachers, and staff with the necessary resources, expertise, and guidance to implement the PBIS framework effectively.
- Providing opportunities for administrators, teachers, and staff to collaborate with colleagues to share insights, strategies, and successes.
- Establishing measurable outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of the PBIS program and make improvements as needed.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Provide a thorough overview of the major components of PBIS.
- Review PBIS expectations and how to gain staff buy-in.
- Review the details of special education teachers' perceptions of implementing PBIS with SWDs.
- Train and inform participants on staff inclusion and buy-in.
- Promote the necessity for staff buy-in, inclusion in/on PBIS school and district committees, and continual follow-up for progress.
- Provide a forum for the PBIS community to discuss why there is a lack of buy-in and their perceptions of PBIS.
- Provide a forum to develop a proactive "next steps" plan that addresses the special education teachers' perceptions of PBIS and strengthens their buy-in to the school-wide initiative.

### **Target Audience**

- District-level PBIS leadership

- Elementary and Middle School PBIS teams/committees

### Timeline

The PD sessions will take place on the pre-planning days specified on the school calendar, from July 25 to July 27, 2024. This intensive training will consist of three full-day sessions that include a variety of instructional elements. Each day will have a well-organized agenda with presentations, interactive group discussions, team-building exercises, in-depth conversations, and chances for participants to reflect on their learning.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>8:30-10:00</i>	<i>10:00-10:15</i>	<i>10:15-12:00</i>	<i>1:00-2:30</i>	<i>2:30-3:00</i>	<i>3:30-4:00</i>
<b>July 25, 2024</b>	Welcome Assign Teams Open Share	BREAK	PBIS Overview Major Components Securing Staff Buy-in	Study Results What does this mean?	Discussions/Reflections	Q & A
<b>July 26, 2024</b>	Welcome Team Discussion	BREAK	Barriers to Successful Implementation Open Share	Ways to promote inclusion for ALL staff	Discussions/Reflections	Q&A
<b>July 27, 2024</b>	Welcome Introduce Scenario Activity	BREAK	Scenario Group Activity Present to Group	Scenario Activity Pt. 2 Present to Group	Discussions/Reflections	Q& A

### Materials and Equipment

- Index Cards
- Post-Its
- Anchor Chart
- Markers
- Hand-outs and PBIS training materials
- Evaluation Forms

- Laptop/Smartboard
- Evaluation forms
- Wheel (to spin for choices)
- Prize bags

## Day 1 Agenda- Meaningful Three-Day Professional Development for District PBIS Leadership and School PBIS Teams

<b>AGENDA</b>	
<b>Staff PD: PBIS Through the SPED Lens</b>	
<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>DAY 1</b>	
<b>8:30am -10:00 am</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Welcome Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Breakfast (Thank you Waffle House)</li> <li>✚ Morning Check-in</li> <li>✚ Spin Wheel to assign Teams (this will be your team for the entire training)</li> <li>✚ Break into your Teams and discuss what you know about PBIS.</li> <li>✚ Open Share: What do YOU know about PBIS</li> <li>✚ Post Answers on the Team Board</li> </ul>
<b>10:00 am-10:15 am</b>	<b>Break-Bathrooms are on hallways 100 &amp; 300</b>
<b>10:15 am-12:00 pm</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Presentation</b> <i>PBIS Overview</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Major Components</li> <li>✚ PBIS Expectations</li> <li>✚ Securing Staff Buy-In</li> <li>✚ Questions?</li> </ul>
<b>12:00 pm-1:00 pm</b>	Lunch on your own (please be back on time so we can stay on schedule)
<b>1:00 pm-2:30 pm</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Study Results</li> <li>✚ What does this mean?</li> </ul>
<b>2:30-pm -3:30 pm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Complete Day 1 Survey</li> <li>✚ Discussions/Reflections-What NEW thing did you learn today?</li> <li>✚ Open Share</li> <li>✚ Dismissal</li> </ul>
<b>3:30 pm-4:00 pm</b>	<b><i>Any more Questions? Come and Talk to me 😊</i></b>

Adapted From: Center on PBIS (2020, July). *Returning to School: Staff Professional Development (PD) Days Template.*

Day 1 PowerPoint Presentation

**PBIS Overview and Study Results**

Kylie M. S. Darnell-Wilson, Doctoral Candidate

How do we know if this works for the **entire school?**

a {school-wide} **PBIS Plan**

What do you know about PBIS?

<p><b>Team 1</b> Team ideas:</p> <p><b>Team 3</b> Team ideas:</p> <p><b>Team 5</b> Team ideas:</p>	<p><b>Team 2</b> Team ideas:</p> <p><b>Team 4</b> Team ideas:</p> <p><b>Team 6</b> Team ideas:</p>
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**Objectives**

Participants will:

- Review Major Components of PBIS
- Review PBIS Expectations
- Review ways to secure buy-in
- Become informed about study results
- Review teacher perceptions of PBIS

What is Positive Behavior Intervention & Support?

**PBIS IS:**

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health.
- When implemented with fidelity, PBIS improves social-emotional competencies, academic success, and school climate.
- It also improves teacher health and well-being.
- It is a way to create positive, predictable, equitable and safe learning environments where everyone thrives.

-Center on PBIS, 2020

**Break Time**  
**15 Minutes**

**Major Components**

1. Common Philosophy & Purpose
2. Leadership
3. Clarifying Expected Behavior
4. Teaching Expected Behavior
5. Encouraging Expected Behavior
6. Discouraging Inappropriate Behavior
7. Ongoing Monitoring
8. Effective Classroom Practices

**Major Components**

An Effective PBIS Framework Requires Clear Sets of Positive Expectations and Behaviors

- Provides Consistency in Language
- Provides Consistency in What To Teach
- Provides Consistency in What to Recognize
- Provides Consistency in What to Correct

**Activity**

Take 5 minutes with your team and DRAW A PAPER.

That's it so move instructions until the time goes off

**Activity**

If your team has these items give yourself a point:

- Ties... 2 points each
- Play equipment... 2 points each
- People... 4 points each
- Food... 4 points
- Signs... 10 points
- Parking lot... 10 points
- Cars... 20 points each
- Bunch... 20 points each

**Activity Point Tally**

Team 1  
Team 2  
Team 3  
Team 4  
Team 5  
Team 6

WINNING TEAM PLEASE CLAIM PRIZE ON BACK TABLE

### Activity Explanation

- With an instructor other than to "have a party" the participants draw their interpretation of a party.
- How hard was it for you to know what I wanted without explicit instructions?
- This is why it is important that our students and peers are CLEAR of our expectations

### Buy-In why is it important?

To successfully implement PBIS in the classroom, teachers must understand the framework and how to implement the program with their students. Initially, if they are not on board, it will be difficult for them to engage their students and help them learn. Teacher buy-in is crucial because it sets the tone for the year and helps to create a positive learning environment. In addition, a teacher who is excited and invested in PBIS is more likely to be enthusiastic about supporting and promoting PBIS values.

### Securing Buy-In

**Common Reasons for Lack of Buy-In: Misconceptions about PBIS**

"We already have a long list of programs! How can we possibly implement this another program?"

"This is just for behavior. Behavior has been taken care of by the school."

"We don't have time for this. We have to focus on the core curriculum."

"We don't have the resources to do this. We need more staff, more money, more training."

"We don't have the support from the administration. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the teachers. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the students. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the parents. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the community. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the district. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the state. They don't see the value in this."

"We don't have the buy-in from the federal government. They don't see the value in this."

### Securing Buy-In

- Supportive PBIS leadership
- Clear, concise reasons for and belief in PBIS
- Consistent: Follow through with plans, processes, and promises
- Inclusive: Involve teacher leaders and parents/community support
- Communicative: Model PBIS in their positive communication style
- Transparent: Expectations, objectives, and processes are clear
- Organized: Steps out and track goals
- Reflective: Seek feedback

### Indicators of Buyin

**Assessments: 80% of the staff are able to...**

- State definition of school-wide PBIS
- State the school-wide behavioral expectations

**80% of the staff...**

- Actively participate in non-classroom settings
- Agree to support SWPBS action plans
- Have more positive daily interactions with students than negative
- Have opportunities to be recognized for their SWPBS efforts

### Questions?

### LUNCH on your Own

Please be back and seated with your team at 1:00

### Study Results

**RESEARCH QUESTION 1:**

**WHY ARE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS NOT IMPLEMENTING PBIS STRATEGIES WITH THEIR SWPBS?**

Teacher A

TEACHER A FELT THAT THE STUDENTS LACKED A TOTAL UNDERSTANDING OF PBIS AND FURTHER DESCRIBED THEIR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING IT IS HARD FOR MY STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND A FOUR-TOKEN ECONOMY AND THEN A FEED-FORCKER. SO, IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MY KIDS REALLY RESPOND TO OR THAT I'VE SEEN CHANGES IN THEIR BEHAVIOR. MY STUDENTS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE FUNCTION OF RULES AND THAT RULES KEEP US SAFE. THEY HAVE A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT ESTABLISHING GOOD HABITS. SO I DON'T THINK THEY REALLY UNDERSTAND AT ALL.

Teacher C

"IT PBIS REALLY WASN'T EFFECTIVE AS A WHOLE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN BECAUSE THE CHILDREN NEVER KNEW WHEN THEY WOULD RECEIVE A TANGIBLE REWARD WITH THE POINTS THEY EARNED." TEACHER A FELT THAT THE STUDENTS LACKED A TOTAL UNDERSTANDING OF PBIS AND FURTHER DESCRIBED THEIR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING.

Teacher C

FELT THAT FOR PBIS TO WORK WITH SWPBS, IT NEEDED TO BE DIFFERENTIATED AND USED AT HOME TO IMPLEMENT IT EFFECTIVELY. TEACHER C STATED, "I THINK PBIS WORKS GENERALLY SPEAKING FOR THE SCHOOL, BUT I THINK WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, A LOT OF THINGS YOU DO HAVE TO BE TAILORED OR MODIFIED FOR THE SPECIFIC CHILD."

Teacher D

FELT THAT PBIS WAS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED WITH SWPBS BECAUSE IT WAS NOT CONSISTENTLY USED IN ALL AREAS OF THE SCHOOL. TEACHER D STATED, "ELEMENTARY KIDS ARE CONFUSED BY PBIS BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE SOMETHING CONSISTENT ACROSS ALL CLASSES, SPECIALS, IN THE LUNCHROOM AND ON THE BUS."

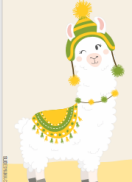
Teacher E

PBIS WAS NICE IN THEORY, HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT THE BEST FOR REACHING THE STUDENTS I SERVE BECAUSE IT IS ABSTRACT AND NOT CONCRETE ENOUGH FOR MY STUDENTS TO GRASP." TEACHER C ALSO STATED THAT THE ISSUES WITH PBIS WERE BECAUSE OF THE STUDENTS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PBIS ACTUALLY WAS.

Teacher G

FELT PBIS WAS GOOD FOR GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS BUT NOT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION. THEY FELT THE TECHNOLOGY WAS TOO DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND AND TOO ADVANCED FOR STUDENTS WITH COGNITIVE DEFICITS." TEACHER G FELT THAT IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE EFFECTIVE FOR THE STUDENTS THEY SERVED, THE PROGRAM WOULD NEED TO BE DIFFERENTIATED TO MEET THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF ALL OF THE STUDENTS.






Teacher J

**THAT THE LACK OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PBIS HAD TO DO WITH A LACK OF BUY IN FROM TEACHERS AND A LACK OF CONSISTENCY**


28



Teacher J

SEVERAL TEACHERS AREN'T EVEN GIVING OUT PBIS POINTS THIS YEAR, SO THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY CONSISTENCY. THE TEAM (PBIS) SAID THEY WOULD DO ONE THING FOR THE TEACHERS ONE YEAR, AND THIS YEAR, THEY ARE DOING SOMETHING TOTALLY DIFFERENT, SO A LOT OF THE TEACHERS HAVE GIVEN UP ON PBIS POINTS. ON TOP OF THAT, IT'S TOO MUCH CONSULTING, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THERE IS NO CONSISTENCY FROM THE TOP, THERE IS THAT LITTLE CONSISTENCY SCHOOL.

29



Teacher J

IT IS A GOOD EFFORT TO GIVE OUT PBIS, BUT THERE IS NOT MUCH BUY IN FROM THE STAFF OR STUDENTS AND THERE IS NO COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF EXPECTATIONS. SO, THERE IS A MIXED WAY THAT THE STUDENTS GET FEEDBACK AND HOW THEY GET PRAISE OR THE REWARDS THEY HAVE EARNED. IT IS JUST NOT CONSISTENT. OUR SCHOOL HAS NO PHYSICAL STORE, SO IT REQUIRES A LOT FROM THE HOMEWORK TEACHERS TO GET THE KIDS' ORDERS, TALLY THEM UP, SEND THEM TO THE COUNSELOR, AND THEN GET THE STUFF TO MAKE IT. IT CAN BE VERY CONSIDERABLE, SO SOME TEACHERS DON'T GIVE OUT POINTS AT ALL.


30

**Study Results**

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

**WHAT ARE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS WHEN ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT PBIS WITH SWDS?**


31



Teacher A

HAD MIXED PERCEPTIONS OF IMPLEMENTING PBIS WITH STUDENTS. THEY STATED, "IT IS HARDER FOR THE STUDENTS TO LEARN THIS YEAR TO UNDERSTAND PBIS; I WAS ABLE TO USE THE MATRICES A LOT MORE WITH MY PREVIOUS STUDENTS, BUT NOW MY STUDENTS DO NOT UNDERSTAND AT ALL."

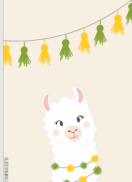
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Teacher B

FOCUSED ON THE LONG-TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF PBIS WITH THEIR STUDENT POPULATION AND DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES HAD THE SAME CHARACTER TRAITS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE BUILDING, INCLUDING THE BUS, CAFETERIA, HALLWAYS, AND BATHROOMS.

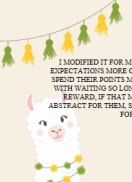
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Teacher B

MY STUDENTS LOVE THE DINO THAT IS MADE IN THE PBIS POINTS APP, BUT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE EARNING POINTS TO BUY DINOS. THEY HATE THE IMMEDIATE RECOGNITION OF HEARING THE "DINO" NOISE, BUT THE LONG-TERM RESPONSE ISN'T THERE. THE STUDENTS DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE NOISE IS CONNECTED TO POINTS. NONE OF MY STUDENTS ARE THROUGH IN THE MOMENT WHEN THEY'RE SCREAMING AND YELLING AND HAVING A MELTDOWN, LIKE OR REALLY WHEN I COULD GET POINTS RIGHT NOW, SO I ALWAYS TALK HOW LONG THAT THE UNDERSTANDING IS TO HELP THEM CONNECT. I TRY TO GET THEM TO REMEMBER THAT'S MORE IMMEDIATE THAN THE POINTS. THIS IS FOR THE ONES WHO CAN CONTINUALLY UNDERSTAND. FOR THE ONES THAT CAN'T, THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY'RE WORKING TOWARDS A REWARD. THEY JUST HEAR THE "DINO" AND THEY LIKE THAT.

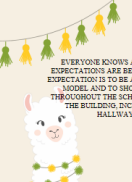
34



Teacher C

I MODIFIED IT FOR MY STUDENTS A BIT TO MAKE THE EXPECTATIONS MORE CLASSROOM-SPECIFIC SO THEY CAN SPEND THEIR POINTS MORE OFTEN. THEY DON'T DO WELL WITH WAITING SO LONG BETWEEN THE POINTS AND THE REWARD. IF THAT MAKES SENSE, IT WAS A BIT TOO ABSTRACT FOR THEM, SO I HELPED THEM PLAN TO SAVE UP FOR BIG REWARDS.

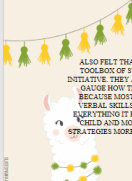
35



Teacher C

EVERYONE KNOWS AND UNDERSTANDS WHAT THE EXPECTATIONS ARE BECAUSE IT'S FAIRLY CATCHY, THE EXPECTATION IS TO BE A RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE ROLE MODEL AND TO SHOW THOSE CHARACTER TRAITS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE BUILDING, INCLUDING THE BUS, CAFETERIA, HALLWAYS, AND BATHROOMS.

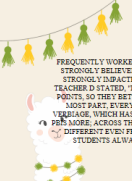
36



Teacher C

ALSO FELT THAT PBIS WAS USEFUL, BUT ONLY AS A TOOLBOX OF STRATEGIES NOT AS A STAND-ALONE INITIATIVE. THEY ALSO STATED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO CHANGE HOW THE STUDENTS BEHAVE BECAUSE MOST OF MY STUDENTS HAVE EMERGING SOCIAL SKILLS AND THROUGH WE USE VISUALS FOR EVERYTHING IT HAS TO BE TAILORED TO THE SPECIFIC CHILD AND MODIFIED BECAUSE THERE ARE OTHER STRATEGIES MORE EFFECTIVE THAN ALWAYS USING PBIS WITH THEM.

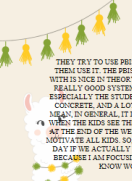
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Teacher D

FREQUENTLY WORKED WITH ANOTHER TEACHER WHO STRONGLY BELIEVED IN THE PBIS STRATEGIES AND STRONGLY IMPACTED THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF PBIS. TEACHER D STATED, "I AM VERY SPECIFIC WHEN GIVING POINTS, SO THEY BETTER UNDERSTAND WHY. FOR THE MOST PART, EVERYONE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE VISUALS, WHICH HAS HELPED STUDENTS UNDERSTAND PBIS MORE. ACROSS THE SCHOOL, EXPECTATIONS AREN'T DIFFERENT EVEN FROM GRADE TO GRADE, SO OUR STUDENTS ALWAYS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT."


38



Teacher E

THEY TRY TO USE PBIS BECAUSE THE COUNTY MAKES THEM USE IT. THE PBIS SYSTEM THAT WE'RE WORKING WITH IS NICER IN THEORY, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT IT IS A REALLY GOOD SYSTEM FOR REWARDS ALL STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY THE STUDENTS IN MY CLASS. IT IS NOT VERY CONCRETE, AND A LOT OF MY STUDENTS NEED THAT. I MEAN, IN GENERAL, IT IS DIFFICULTLY LIKE AN INCENTIVE WHEN THE KIDS SEE THEIR NAME CALLED FOR A REWARD AT THE END OF THE WEEK, BUT IT DOESN'T REALLY MOTIVATE ALL KIDS. SO, HONESTLY, IT WOULD BE A GOOD DAY IF WE ACTUALLY USED ALL OF THE THINGS IN PBIS BECAUSE I AM FOCUSING ON USING MY SYSTEM THAT I KNOW WORKS WITH MY KIDS.

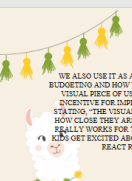
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Teacher E

I NOTICED THERE'S A LOT OF BUY IN FROM THE KIDS WITH THE DIFFERENT PRIZES THAT THEY CAN GET AND THAT HAS CHANGED THEIR BEHAVIOR FROM BEING VERY IMPULSIVE TO THINKING ABOUT THEIR ACTIONS OR JUST REFLECTING ON MAKING BETTER CHOICES. THE TEACHERS ALSO FELT THAT THE STUDENTS WERE RESPONDING WELL TO PBIS AND STATED THAT THEY LIKED IT. THERE IS NO REAL EMBARRASSMENT WITH THIS GROUP OF WHO HAS MORE POINTS THAN THEIR PEERS BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE FOCUSED ON WHAT THEY CAN BUY FROM THE STORE.


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Teacher F

WE ALSO USE IT AS A SOCIAL STUDY TOOL TO TEACH BUDGETING AND HOW TO SAVE FOR A BIGGER PRIZE. THE VISUAL ASPECT OF USING THE APP WAS ALSO A HUGE INCENTIVE FOR IMPLEMENTATION. WITH TEACHER F STATING, "THE VISUAL OF THE BOARD HELPS THEM SEE HOW CLOSE THEY ARE TO EARNING A PRIZE, AND THAT REALLY WORKS FOR THEM; THEN, GIVING THE OTHER KIDS GET EXCITED ABOUT THEIR POINTS AND HOW THEY REACT REALLY HELPS THEM."

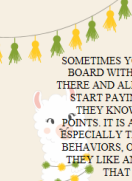
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Teacher G

NOTICED THAT WHEN STUDENTS ARE WORKING AS PART OF THAT BIGGER TEAM, IT GIVES MY STUDENTS A CONNECTION PRIZE TO OTHER PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL. ALMOST LIKE AN ACCOUNTABILITY PRIZE. THEY AREN'T JUST TRYING TO DO SOMETHING FOR THEMSELVES. ONE THING I LIKE ABOUT IMPLEMENTING PBIS IS THE COMMON LANGUAGE OF BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS. IT'S EASIER TO TALK TO MY STUDENTS, EVEN THOSE WITH MORE NEEDS BECAUSE YOU CAN EXPLAIN WHAT THE EXPECTATIONS IS HOMOGENEOUS, NOT HEARING DIFFERENT WORDS OR DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS FROM DIFFERENT TEACHERS. IT'S ALL UNIFORM.

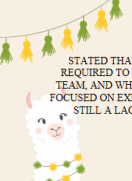
42



Teacher H

SOMETIMES YOU CAN JUST PULL UP THE BOARD WITH ALL OF THEIR FACES ON THERE AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, THEY WILL START PAYING ATTENTION BECAUSE... THEY KNOW I AM ABOUT TO ISSUE POINTS. IT IS A REWARD FOR STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS, ONCE YOU FIND OUT WHAT THEY LIKE AND FIND A WAY TO WORK THAT INTO THEIR PBIS."

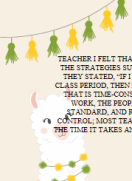
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Teacher I

STATED THAT ALL TEACHERS ARE REQUIRED TO BE A PART OF THE PBIS TEAM, AND WHILE SEVERAL MEETINGS FOCUSED ON EXPECTATIONS, THERE WAS STILL A LACK OF CONSISTENCY.

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Teacher I

TEACHER I FELT THAT THE TIME IT TOOK TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGIES SUCCESSFULLY WAS "CONSIDERABLE." THEY STATED, "IF I DON'T DO IT (GIVE POINTS) EVERY CLASS PERIOD, THEN I HAVE TO GO BACK AND ADD THEM. THAT IS TIME-CONSUMING. IF ANYTHING IS GOING TO WORK, THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE HAVE TO SET THE STANDARD AND RIGHT NOW, IT'S TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL. MOST TEACHERS DON'T USE PBIS BECAUSE OF THE TIME IT TAKES AND THE LACK OF CONSISTENCY FROM THE TOP."

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Teacher J  
**FELT THAT THOUGH THE STUDENTS UNDERSTOOD THE PURPOSE OF PBIS, THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH IT DUE TO AN OVERALL LACK OF CONSISTENCY. THEY COULD MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE PBIS OVERALL BUT DID NOT FEEL EMPOWERED ENOUGH TO SHARE THOSE IDEAS WITH THE PBIS TEAM OR ADMINISTRATORS.**

Teacher J  
**THE STUDENT RESPONSE TO PBIS IS DIFFERENT FROM WHEN THEY ARE GIVEN A REGULAR COMPLIMENT OR VERBAL PRAISE. THERE IS MORE EXCITEMENT FOR A PBIS POINT THAN JUST VERBAL PRAISE. THERE WAS MORE ACCOUNTABILITY. WHEN MAYBE IT WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE, BUT NOW THE REWARDS AREN'T TANGIBLE. THERE ARE TEACHERS WHO DO NOT FEEL IT DOES NOT BEING EFFECTIVE FOR ANY STUDENT POPULATION BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF CONSISTENCY REALLY IMPACTS THE EFFECTIVENESS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE GOT POINTS, BUT THERE ARE LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO TRADE. SALES IF THE STORE WAS OPEN ANY TIME OR DOING LUNCH, THE STUDENTS WOULD KNOW THAT THINGS ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM.**

Teacher J  
**OTHER STUDENTS WILL SEE, LIKE, HEY, YOU CAN BUY A SWEATPANTS DAY OR A NO HOMEWORK DAY OR WHATEVER, SO IT WAS REALLY OBVIOUS TO OTHER KIDS THAT WOULD HELP BUY IN BECAUSE OTHER STUDENTS WOULD SEE WHAT THEY COULD GET WITH THEIR PBIS POINTS. I DON'T WANT TO SAY THAT IT'S NOT EFFECTIVE, BUT THE WAY IT'S USED NOW MAKES IT LESS EFFECTIVE, IF THAT MAKES SENSE.**

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**Presentation of Data Themes**

**Theme 1**

- LACK OF CONSISTENCY AND INCONSISTENTLY FROM THE TOP THAT GENERALLY IMPACTED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PBIS INITIATIVE. THE RESPONSE TEACHERS FELT THAT THEIR SCHOOL WAS CONSISTENT, HOWEVER, PARTICIPANTS STATED THAT THE REASON FOR NOT IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES WITH THESE STUDENTS WAS A LACK OF CONSISTENCY, AND INCONSISTENTLY. SOME TEACHERS STATED TO USE THIS HOWEVER, THEY STOPPED WHEN THEY SAW OTHERS NOT CONSISTENT AND THAT THERE WERE NO CONSEQUENCES.

**Theme 2**

- COGNITIVE ABILITY OF STUDENT POPULATION. LOCATORS FELT THAT THE STUDENTS THEY SERVED COULD NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND PBIS AS A CONCEPT IT NEEDED TO BE DIFFERENTIATED TO MEET THEIR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS. AN INSTRUCTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING TO PBIS INTO SOMETHING THAT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND USE IN THE CLASSROOM. OTHERS HEARD THE MESSAGE BUT DIDN'T FULLY COMMIT THEMSELVES. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THEY PROVIDED THEIR TEAM WITH FEEDBACK, GAVE THEM STUDENTS WHO DID NOT KNOW HOW TO USE IT WITH HANDS ON THEIR COGNITIVE ABILITIES.

**Presentation of Data Themes**

**Theme 3**

- LONG-TERM RESPONSE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION. LOCATORS FELT THAT THEIR STUDENTS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF PBIS AND THAT THERE WERE OTHER ALTERNATIVE CHALLENGE HANGERS ALONG WITH EARNING REWARDS IN THE LONG TERM. TEACHERS WERE ASKED IF THEIR STUDENTS LOVED TO HAVE THE "THING" THAT THE APPROACH WHEN MAKING A POSITIVE POINT. HOWEVER, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE CONNECTION THAT THEIR STUDENTS OR DID NOT OWN THE POINTS BECAUSE OF THEIR BEHAVIOR. SOME TEACHERS REWARDED STUDENTS WITH CHECKS, BUT THEY WERE ASKED IF THEY WOULD NOT FEEL LEFT OUT.

**Theme 4**

- MODIFIED PBIS TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE. SOME FEEL THAT THE TIME BETWEEN EARNING POINTS AND EARNING A REWARD WAS TOO LONG FOR THEIR STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WERE EARNING THE POINTS. TEACHERS STATED, "REWARDS ARE LIMITED TO MAKE GREAT CHANGES EVERY SINGLE DAY, BUT THEN THEY HAVE TO WAIT FOR WEEKS TO GET A PRIZE. MY STUDENTS REALLY STRUGGLE WITH THAT." SOME TEACHERS WERE ASKED IF THE REWARDS WERE BEING REINFORCED THROUGHOUT THE DAY FOR THEIR STUDENTS. HOWEVER, THEY HAD NO IDEA HOW THEY WERE PAID TO EMPLOYING THE PBIS STRATEGIES. ANOTHER TEACHER ASKED ABOUT THE STUDENTS WHO WERE REFERRED TO THE STUDENTS.

**More on Theme 1**

- MANY TEACHERS DEVELOPED THEIR OWN METHODS TO MANAGE STUDENT BEHAVIOR WHILE STILL ATTEMPTING TO USE PBIS BUT KEPT THEIR PERSONAL METHODS AS A PROXY AND PBIS ON THE BACK BURNER.

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**More on Theme 1**

- IN ORDER TO MANAGE STUDENT BEHAVIOR, TEACHERS USED TANGIBLE REWARDS (CANDY, PHYSICAL TOKENS), TOKEN BOARDS, DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT, VISUAL, INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PLANS, AND OTHER METHODS THAT THEY FELT WERE MORE EFFECTIVE FOR THEIR STUDENT POPULATION.

**More on Theme 2**

- SEVERAL TEACHERS SPOKE ABOUT THE LANGUAGE OF PBIS BEING TOO "CORSELY" OR "ABSTRACT" FOR THESE STUDENTS. THOUGH THEY PARTICIPATED IN EARNING POINTS, MANY OF THEM WERE UNABLE TO CONDUCT EARNING POINTS TO A NEED TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR. MANY PBIS PROGRAMS ASKED STUDENTS TO BE RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, AND POLITE. HOWEVER, THERE WERE SEVERAL INSTANCES WHEN TEACHERS STATED THAT THEIR STUDENTS COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THOSE WORDS MEANT. TEACHER C STATED, "THERE IS A NEED TO SHOW STUDENTS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RESPECTFUL, NOT JUST HEARING THE WORDS. THERE NEEDS TO BE SOME ACTIONABLE SCENARIO TO EXPLAIN HOW THEY CAN BE RESPECTFUL."

**More on Theme 2**

- STUDENTS MAY UNDERSTAND IT BETTER IF YOU USED WORDS LIKE NICE OR SIMPLER SYNONYMS THAT OUR KIDS CAN UNDERSTAND, AND RIGHT NOW, THAT IS NOT THE CASE."

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**More on Theme 3**

- TEACHER A STATED THAT EVEN THOUGH THE STUDENTS HEARD THE LANGUAGE TO BE RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, AND MAKE GOOD CHOICES, THEY DID NOT HAVE THE PREREQUISITE SKILLS TO GRASP WHAT THAT LOOKED LIKE FULLY. THEY ALSO STATED, "THE STUDENTS ARE JUST LEARNING WHAT GOODDAYS ARE, JUST LEARNING THAT RULES EXIST, THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RESPECTFUL OR RESPONSIBLE, BUT THEY KNOW WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD, SOMEONE EARNED SOMETHING, BUT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT REALLY MEANS AT ALL."

**More on Theme 4**

- MOST SCHOOLS HAD THE PBIS TEAM MAKING DECISIONS WITH VERY LITTLE STUDENT INPUT. SO, THERE WERE TIMES WHEN THE REWARDS THAT WERE OFFERED WERE UNWANTED BY THE STUDENTS. TEACHERS WENT INTO FURTHER DETAIL REGARDING THE NEED FOR A HOOKED CONNECTION FOR STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH SENIORS' NEEDS. THEY STATED, "WE HAVE STUDENTS THAT PARTICIPATED ALL YEAR AND GOT TO THE BIG PARTY, AND IT WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS TOO GOOD FOR THEM, OR WHEN WE HAD A WATER PARTY, THERE WERE STUDENTS THAT HAD ATTENDANCE TO GETTING TO SO, THEY DID EVERYTHING THAT WAS REQUIRED TO EARN THE REWARD BUT COULDN'T PARTICIPATE AND THERE WERE NO ALTERNATIVES FOR THEM."

**More on Theme 4**

- SO THOSE REWARDS DO NOT WORK FOR THOSE KIDS; FEEL THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE OTHER OPTIONS FOR THEM IN ORDER TO MAKE IT MORE INCLUSIVE AND EXCITING FOR ALL KIDS, NOT JUST THOSE IN GENERAL EDUCATION."

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58 So What Does all of this mean?

59 Discuss with your group and come up with 5 things that you find interesting about the results

60 OPEN SHARE ACTIVITY 2  
Team 1 Team 2  
• KEY POINTS/TAKEAWAY • KEY POINTS/TAKEAWAY

61 OPEN SHARE ACTIVITY 2  
Team 3 Team 4  
• KEY POINTS/TAKEAWAY • KEY POINTS/TAKEAWAY

62 OPEN SHARE ACTIVITY 2  
Team 5 Team 6  
• KEY POINTS/TAKEAWAY • KEY POINTS/TAKEAWAY

63 WRAP IT UP

64 QUESTIONS?

## Evaluation-Day 1 PBIS Professional Development

### Presentation Evaluation Form

**Participants** - Your opinion matters to me. Using the survey instrument below, please circle one answer for each question. There is space below for additional comments. If you run out of space, please feel free to write on the back of this form.

**Thanks for attending today**

Facilitator/s: Wynter Deans

Class: *A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED lens*

### Day 1: PBIS Overview/Study Results

The Presenter:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	The presenter delivered the material in a clear and structured manner.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The presenter maintained my interest during the entire presentation.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The presenter answered questions effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The presenter was well-organized and prepared.	1	2	3	4	5

The Presentation:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
7	The presentation was concise and informative.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The presentation contained practical examples and useful techniques that applied to current work.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The visual aids were effective.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Overall, I would rate this presentation/instruction as:	1	2	3	4	5
11	Would you recommend this presentation to others?	NO				YES

Additional Comments:

## Day 2 Agenda- Meaningful Three-Day Professional Development for District PBIS Leadership and School PBIS Teams

<b>AGENDA</b>	
Schedule	Activity
<b>DAY 2</b>	
8:30am -9:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Breakfast (Thank you IHOP)</li> <li>○ Welcome Staff</li> <li>○ Check in</li> <li>○ Get into your Teams</li> <li>○ Pressing Questions from Yesterday's Session?</li> </ul>
9:00 am-10:00am	<p><b>Team Discussion: What are some Barriers to Successful Implementation?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Open Share</li> <li>○ Presentation</li> <li>○ Barriers to Successful PBIS Implementation</li> <li>○ Reflection Time</li> <li>○</li> </ul>
10:00 am-10:15 am	Break
10:15 am-12:00 pm	<p><b>Team Discussion: What are some ways to promote inclusion for all staff?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Open Share</li> <li>○ Presentation</li> <li>○ Promoting Inclusion for ALL Staff</li> <li>○ Questions/Reflections</li> </ul>
12:00 pm-1:00 pm	<b>Lunch on your own (please be back on time so we can stay on schedule)</b>
1:00 pm-2:45 pm	<b>GROUP ACTIVITY</b>
2:45-pm -3:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion</li> <li>○ Discussions/Reflections: What NEW thing did you learn today?</li> <li>○ Complete Day 2 Survey</li> <li>○ Dismissal</li> </ul>
3:30 pm-4:00 pm	<b><i>Still have Questions? Come and talk to me ☺</i></b>

## Day 2 PowerPoint Presentation

### Barriers to PBIS Implementation

Written by: T. Demarkov  
District: Central Carolina

#### Why PBIS?

PBIS is a skill-building approach that strengthens the foundation of social skills for all students. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of schoolwide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. Educators who work in schools that implement PBIS report a high level of satisfaction, citing the positive effects of being on the "same page" with their colleagues and experiencing improved school climate.

#### Discussion

- Take 5-7 minutes to discuss with your team any reasons you have heard from peers as to why they aren't using PBIS.

#### OPEN SHARE

- Team 1
- Team 2
- Team 3
- Team 4
- Team 5
- Team 6

#### So what are some common barriers?

- Lack of resources
- Lack of parent engagement
- Competing priorities
- Lack of administrator or staff support
- Fidelity of Implementation
- Consistency

#### Reflection Time

- Spin the wheel
- After choosing your Team Barrier use the story board to write out 6 ways to overcome your barrier

#### BREAK TIME 15 mins

#### OPEN SHARE

- Share Story Board Discussions
- Team 1
- Team 2
- Team 3
- Team 4
- Team 5
- Team 6

#### Promoting inclusion

- What does it mean to be "inclusive"
- OPEN DISCUSSION

#### Promoting Inclusion

- Students with disabilities benefit from Tier 1 when supports are developed and provided in a way that is accessible and relevant to all. Within classrooms, children with and without disabilities benefit from explicit instruction in social, emotional, and behavioral skills, use of opportunities to respond, positive acknowledgments, and brief reminders, like prompts and one-correctors. The suggestions for differentiating Tier 1 below allow students with disabilities to access Tier 1 supports alongside their peers. Check out [Supporting Students with Disabilities in the Classroom within a PBIS Framework](#) for more examples of Tier 1 practices.

#### Promoting Inclusion

- Students with disabilities who have targeted social, emotional, and behavioral needs may benefit from Tier 2 supports. Tier 2 interventions are targeted to address common needs for small groups of students. To learn more about Tier 2, visit our [Tier 2](#) page. One consideration when supporting students with disabilities through Tier 2 interventions is to ensure the Tier 2 intervention does not reduce or replace services outlined in the student's IEP. Considerations for differentiating Tier 2 supports for students with disabilities are outlined in Figure 1, below.

#### Promoting Inclusion

#### Promoting Inclusion

**Equity**

- Provide equity MTSS to for all students, families, and educators. All students, in other words, MTSS supports individual needs ability, non-ability, gender, LGBTQIA+, socioeconomic, language, etc. backgrounds.

**Praxis**

- Develop practices that address identified needs, have supporting evidence, and match the local culture and context. Gather, align, and assess practice effectiveness.

**Outcomes**

- Make student growth and health central to all decisions. Student outcomes that reflect equitable learning opportunities must be the decision criteria for all decisions.

#### LUNCH TIME

#### 1 HOUR

#### Group Activity

These are the only expectations that are placed in the classroom is this inclusive?

Classroom Expectations	Expectations	Engage
Respectful	Use your language	Use your voice
Responsible	Follow directions	Use your materials
Engaged	Use your attention	Use your energy

#### Group Activity

These are the only awards that students can earn in class, is this inclusive?

#### Group Activity

This is the only behavior matrix to be used at the school is this inclusive?

CONDUCTED	LINE BASICS	NEW BASICS	REWARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respectful</li> <li>Responsible</li> <li>Engaged</li> <li>Safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your language</li> <li>Use your voice</li> <li>Use your materials</li> <li>Use your attention</li> <li>Use your energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your language</li> <li>Use your voice</li> <li>Use your materials</li> <li>Use your attention</li> <li>Use your energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your language</li> <li>Use your voice</li> <li>Use your materials</li> <li>Use your attention</li> <li>Use your energy</li> </ul>

#### Group Activity

Is this an example of being inclusive?

Group Activity Discussion

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Inclusion and Check In/ Check Out

- Check-In/Check-Out in PBIS
- As a Tier 2 intervention in PBIS, Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) can give students a hour and allow them to start behavior goals that can lead them back to Tier 1. Check-In/Check-Out intervention forms can be customized to reflect behaviors that need additional focus. Teachers provide feedback to the student on these behaviors throughout the day.

**Benefits to use CICO as your PBIS implementation**

- Provides structure in a student's day
- Creates accountability
- Provides teacher feedback to student and parent
- Creates student motivation
- Improves student behavior
- Increases academic success
- Creates a stronger home-school connection

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Reflections

OPEN SHARE

- What is something you can take away from this session today?

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Questions?  
Please scan code to send any personal questions.

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## Evaluation Day 2 PBIS Professional Development

### Presentation Evaluation Form

**Participants** - Your opinion matters to me. Using the survey instrument below, please circle one answer for each question. There is space below for additional comments. If you run out of space, please feel free to write on the back of this form.

**Thanks for attending today**

Facilitator/s: Wynter Deans    Class: *A Deeper Look at PBIS through the SPED Lens*

### Day 2: PBIS Barriers to Implementation

The Presenter:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	The presenter delivered the material in a clear and structured manner.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The presenter maintained my interest during the entire presentation.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The presenter answered questions effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The presenter was well organized and prepared.	1	2	3	4	5

The Presentation:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
7	The presentation was concise and informative.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The presentation contained practical examples and useful techniques that applied to current work.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The visual aids were effective.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Overall, I would rate this presentation/instruction as:	1	2	3	4	5
11	Would you recommend this presentation to others?	NO				YES

Additional Comments:



### Day 3 Agenda- Meaningful Three-Day Professional Development for District PBIS Leadership and School PBIS Teams

<b>AGENDA</b>	
Schedule	Activity
<b>DAY 3</b>	
8:30am -10:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Breakfast (Thank you Chick-Fil-A)</li> <li>➤ Morning Check-In</li> <li>➤ Break into Teams</li> <li>➤ Scenario Spin-Spin the Wheel for your Teams 2 discussion Scenarios</li> <li>➤ Team Discussion for Your First Scenario</li> </ul>
10:00 am-10:15 am	<b>BREAK</b>
10:15 am-12:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scenario Group Activity Share</li> <li>➤ Each Team comes up and discusses their first scenario</li> <li>➤ Present to Group (please be mindful of time so each group has time to discuss)</li> <li>➤ Each Team needs to designate a PRESENTER &amp; Someone to write information on the Slides to Share with the Group</li> </ul>
12:00 pm-1:00 pm	<b>Lunch on your own (please be back on time so we can stay on schedule)</b>
1:00 pm-2:45 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scenario Group Activity Share Part 2</li> <li>➤ Present to Group (please be mindful of time so each group has time to discuss)</li> </ul>
2:45-pm -3:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Wrap it UP!</b></li> <li>➤ Thank You's</li> <li>➤ Questions/Reflections</li> <li>➤ Complete Day 3 Survey</li> <li>➤ Dismissal</li> </ul>

## Day 3 PowerPoint Presentation

**DAY 3 Activities**

1 2 3  
4 5 6  
Let's get to work!

**Scenario 1**  
Your school's PBIS reward is a water party for students. The school has two classes that have students with severe sensory needs. They have participated all school year and earned the points for the party, however if they do not want to get wet. How can we differentiate this activity so these students can also participate?

**Scenario 2**  
Your school's PBIS program has rewards for students that earned a certain amount of points every 4 weeks. Your school also has 2 special needs pre-school units and these students struggle with the time in between earning points and earning the rewards. How can we differentiate this reward system so that these students can fully participate in the PBIS framework?

**Scenario 3**  
A student in one of the classes has severe behavior issues. He often misses school rewards because of his extreme behavior. This week he has worked really hard and did not have any behavior issues, while in line for the ice cream reward he was seen pushing a student. Another teacher in line tells him he can no longer participate in the activity and removes him from the line. The student says he EARNED his ice cream and was just playing. He starts to have a meltdown. Is there any way to handle this differently?

**Scenario 4**  
At the PBIS team meeting 6 staff members state that they aren't using PBIS for their students because they don't get it anyway. The teachers instead have been using a token system where the students earn skittles. How can you get these teachers on board with your school's PBIS initiative and rewards system?

**Scenario 5**  
Students earn points for positive behavior in order to trade in for PBIS rewards. However students with significant disabilities have difficulty conceptualizing the point to reward trade in. What can be implemented to make the PBIS reward system more accessible for students in this population?

**Scenario 6**  
Today is the point trade in day for PBIS and there are only 6 rewards for the students to choose from. #1 is lunch with the principal, #2 is lunch with the assistant principal and #3 is a homework pass. One student says all of those rewards are lame and just wants to talk. The teacher says to pick one or you will lose your points. The student then says "forget PBIS these rewards are dumb, I'm just going to be bad!" How can we appropriately address this student's concerns and keep them engaged in PBIS?

**WRAP UP**

**LET'S REVIEW WHAT WE LEARNED!**  
Click on the scenario to go to the slide and add your group's ideas for differentiation.

**Scenario 1** **Scenario 4**  
**Scenario 2** **Scenario 5**  
**Scenario 3** **Scenario 6**

**What are your ideas? Let's share Scenario 1**  
Participants discuss their scenarios

**What are your ideas? Let's share Scenario 2**  
Participants discuss their scenarios

**What are your ideas? Let's share Scenario 3**  
Participants discuss their scenarios

**What are your ideas? Let's share Scenario 4**  
Participants discuss their scenarios

**What are your ideas? Let's share Scenario 5**  
Participants discuss their scenarios

**What are your ideas? Let's share Scenario 6**  
Participants discuss their scenarios

**Evaluation Day 3 PBIS Professional Development**  
**Presentation Evaluation Form**

**Participants** - Your opinion matters to me. Using the survey instrument below, please circle one answer for each question. There is space below for additional comments. If you run out of space, please feel free to write on the back of this form.

**Thanks for attending today**

Facilitator/s: Wynter Deans

Class: *A Deeper Look at PBIS through the*

*SPED Lens*

**Day 3: Scenarios-Open Discussion-Group Activities**

The Presenter:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	The presenter delivered the material in a clear and structured manner.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The presenter was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The presenter maintained my interest during the entire presentation.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The presenter answered questions effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The presenter was well organized and prepared.	1	2	3	4	5

The Presentation:

		Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
7	The presentation was concise and informative.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The presentation contained practical examples and useful techniques that applied to current work.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The visual aids were effective.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Overall, I would rate this presentation/instruction as:	1	2	3	4	5
11	Would you recommend this presentation to others?	NO				YES

Additional Comments:

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

**SECTION A - DEMOGRAPHICS**

Years of teaching experience:

Primary Student Exceptionalities:

Elementary or Middle School Teacher:

Member of Schools PBIS Team:

**SECTION B**

1. Please describe your overall experience with PBIS.
2. What steps has your school taken to help introduce PBIS and support to staff?
3. What changes have you noticed in student behavior since the implementation of PBIS?
4. Describe the impact that PBIS has had on your student population.
5. Please describe how PBIS has been implemented in your classroom.
6. Describe how you use PBIS with your students.
7. Describe your students' response to PBIS.
8. Describe your students' understanding of PBIS.
9. Has PBIS impacted your classroom management? If yes, in what ways?
10. Do you believe that PBIS is helpful to your population of students? Please explain why or why not.
11. What alternative methods do you use to manage student behavior?
12. Why do you feel that PBIS is or is not effective for your student population?

## Appendix C: Permission Letter to School Principals

Personal Address  
Personal Address  
Personal Address  
Personal Address

School Name  
[address redacted]

Dear,

**Permission to Conduct Research**

My name is Wynter Sharee Deans, and I am writing this email to request your permission to conduct a study in your school. I am a doctoral student in the Special Education program at Walden University. I am researching special education teachers' perceptions regarding implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with students with disabilities (SWDs).

I am seeking your consent to conduct Zoom or Teams interviews with your elementary or middle school special education teachers. Each interview is expected to last approximately 60 minutes. To ensure that the rights of all participants are protected, participants will be informed about the purpose of the study. They will be allowed to choose not to participate. Participants will also be informed of their right to opt out of the study at any time. The report will not use teacher names to maintain the participants' anonymity. The researcher will provide each participant with an informed consent form, which they will be asked to sign before participating in the interview. The participant will not be asked to record their name on the form.

I am available to answer any questions and clarify any issues relating to the study. I can be contacted by telephone at [redacted] or by email at [redacted]

I look forward to discussing this with you further.

Sincerely,

---

Wynter Sharee Deans

## Appendix D: Email Recruiting Teachers

Dear Teachers,

My name is Wynter Sharee Deans, and I am a student at Walden University. I want to examine special education teachers' perceptions regarding implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with students with disabilities (SWDs).

Your school is one in the district that recently implemented PBIS and is solicited for this multi-site study. I am seeking volunteers that would allow me to interview via Teams using only audio. The audio interview will be recorded but will remain confidential, and your identity will not be published and will remain anonymous.

Each interview is expected to last approximately 45-60 minutes during non-instructional hours. To ensure that the rights of all participants are protected, I will inform volunteers about the purpose of the study, and you will be allowed to choose not to participate. Participants will also be informed of their right to opt out of the study at any time. If you are interested in volunteering for this study, please reply to this email to receive the informed consent form. You will not be asked to record your name on the form, and we can schedule an interview time that works best with your schedule.

I am available to answer any questions and clarify any issues relating to the study and can be contacted by telephone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

I look forward to discussing this with you further.

Sincerely,

---

Wynter Sharee Deans

## Appendix E: Follow-Up Email to Teachers

Good morning, Colleagues!

Please consider participating in my study.

My name is Wynter Deans, and I am recruiting volunteers for my doctoral study. Each participant will earn a \$25 e-gift card to Amazon, Chick-fil-A, or Starbucks. I need (number needed) more participants, so anyone willing to join would help me greatly! I am flexible and willing to work around your schedule. The interview will be entirely online via TEAMS and will be 100% Confidential. Please see the email below for more information and the informed consent.

Please feel free to ask any questions! 😊 Thanks for all of your support!  
Wynter Deans

## Appendix F: Participant Transcripts

Teacher A.WQT3A

Fri, Sep 08, 2023, 9:54 AM • 32:08

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, students, study, classroom, respectful, role model, understand, matrix, hallways, school, implement, behavior, reference, interview, choices, change, differential reinforcement, referrals, year, cognitive ability

**SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Wynter Deans

**Wynter Deans**

If you see me writing, it is just writing just for like just any extra notes. I am going to start by reading the informed consent. You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288. Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Speaker 2**

Please keep the county out of it, and I want to keep my job (laughs)

**Wynter Deans**

So, do you agree to the interview for the study?

**Speaker 2**

Yes, ma'am.



**Wynter Deans**

Okay, thank you so much. Okay, so how many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

This is my 17th

**Wynter Deans**

17th. Perfect. And your primary student exceptionalities.

**Speaker 2**

AU.

**Wynter Deans**

And are you a member of the PBIS Team at your school?

**Speaker 2**

No, I am not a member

**Wynter Deans**

No. Okay. Perfect. So, can you describe your overall experience with PBIS

**Speaker 2**

PBIS is basically our it is the culture of our school. We use those terms that PBIS designates, or we determined as a school that we would use our respectful, responsible role models. It is a language that is used in the hallways and over announcements. I do dip outside, like And when I see, you know our little friends are making great choices that they should be doing, I will say, oh my goodness, they are a respectful, responsible role model; you might want to throw them out some points. So I do try to recognize students because of that, and I do see other members of the school attempting to give my students PBIS points, which, of course, you know, they don't really understand because they are, you know, on a modified curriculum, AU and for me to be good or for me to make great choices every single day for four weeks to get to a prize is something that my students struggle with. So, I mean, we really use a lot of immediate reinforcement within the classroom, but we do reference respectful, responsible role models with our roles throughout the day and during our morning meeting.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. Thank you so much. What steps has your school taken to help introduce PBIS and support you as staff?

**Speaker 2**

Okay, before I go, I'm gonna say that I do that there's a lot of differentiation within my classroom because last year, I had three through fives, and or three through fifth, and my kids were higher functioning. I pushed them, most of them, into a mild cognitively impaired classroom or foundational. Now, I believe I pushed them into understanding so they had a better grasp. So, there is a huge way to differentiate that. So, of course, my Biggers did understand a lot more. And we've referenced the PBIS matrix a lot more than I do with these littles. Right.

**Wynter Deans**

What has your team done to support the staff in PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

They definitely try to support, like I guess, our instructional art admin team and our instructional specialists definitely kind of come up, they may in the school store, they come up with, you know, the fun things that those kiddos can earn that aren't necessarily like, you know, monetary things. I mean, you know, like right now I can see we like half a splash day, it would be water games outside, I saw like a [REDACTED] during your lunch time or something like that, you know, we have four different things right now that they're working for over the course of, you know, the first semester, and then they also can make trips to the PBIS store, our admin does a great job of referencing it every day over announcements, I hear them saying it in the hallways. So, it's definitely, you know, we have made it a part of the school culture. And we do have a team for PBIS. I am not a member of that. So, I'm not completely aware of what goes on. But I know, I guess they do look at the data. And, like, because I know that it is a data-driven system. And we do we're supposed to have less than a certain amount of referrals. We look at what our referrals are, and you know, like what type of behaviors are happening, they'll come back with us and have like meetings and say, Okay, we're having a lot of referrals for this, what can we do? Or, you know, what are some things that you can implement into the classroom to maybe not have referrals based on something that you really shouldn't? We have a matrix of things that should be handled in the classroom and things that the admin should handle. And then you kind of follow the path and see where you are.

**Wynter Deans**

What changes? Have you noticed, if any, your students' behavior since implementing PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

So, of course, my babies, I don't really see them responding to PBIS. So, it's harder for them; it's even hard for my kids to understand like a four-token economy and then a reinforcer. So, it's not something that my kids really respond to or that I've seen changes in them based on it. I've only had these babies for four weeks, and you know that special needs pre-K it takes a while. But I definitely I was here when they implemented PBIS. And like I said, it does make a school culture, and I definitely, you know, a lot of positive words in the hallway versus Stop, don't run, you know, I need walking feet to show me respectful, responsible role model. And in that, you know, kids are able to hear and show me respectful, responsible role models. So that makes them think, what am I doing? That's not that, right, you know, so it's kind of encouraging critical thinking at that same point in time. So, I have just seen a change in the culture. I won't necessarily say a change in that. Again, I'm not on that day to the team, but I won't necessarily say I've seen that huge behavior change. It might be there. It might not; I can't tell you because I've looked at the data. But I definitely think it's a change in the culture, and things are phrased more positively and about, you know, being a respectful, responsible role model. Let's see what else. It definitely just a change in the whole positive five, and that school

**Wynter Deans**

Describe the impact it has had on your student population. I know you said earlier that your third and fifth graders understood much more than what your littles currently understand.

**Speaker 2**

With my third and 5th graders, we used the matrix a lot more. So, I would talk a lot more in-depth with them about, like, the matrix. So, I would be able to like to say, Okay, what is a responsible choice in the lunchroom? Or what is a respectful choice that we can make in the hallway? So, I was teaching them to read that, and they were better able to read it to my third graders than my K through two students that I've gotten this year, but at the same time, like for them to wait a really long time for something that they might not enjoy? You know, because I mean, I didn't want to do field day; they don't like to go outside and play games with all that, right? How dare say and boisterousness.

**Speaker 2**

It seems like it motivates the general, like kids, like they talk about their stuff. I hear I have to earn my points so that I can earn this. And then I kind of laugh at them sometimes because I'm like, Y'all just went to the gym for an extra 30 minutes, and you spent 150 PBIS coins; that makes you happy. It makes me miserable being in here, but

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, so, um, can you describe when you did or tried to implement it? I know, you said what a three to five; you were able to use the matrix? How are you able to implement it with your K through two?

**Speaker 2**

Really, all we're at this point is when we review the rules during the day. During our morning meeting, the rules keep us safe. Can we be focused on teaching sorry for not being safe? No, we go over the rules. We do [REDACTED]. And then, we referenced the matrix. And we are respectful, responsible role models. And I'll have each of my higher kids say respectful or responsible role models. But besides that, like I said, we're really not implementing it that much with the K through two; I definitely do a lot more. When I'm out in the hallways, I see a teacher's class, and they may not be making the best choices. You know, just to reference another one student in that line and start handing out those points. They, the light will change behaviors will change, that differential reinforcement is definitely changed his behaviors without really even addressing another student's behavior. You know what I'm saying?

**Wynter Deans**

No, I agree with that. Um, I know you just kind of already described it, which is pretty much their response to it. So, can you describe your students' understanding of it? Do you think they understand what your babies do your babies? Do you think they understand? Like, why? You know, the PBIS

**Speaker 2**

I don't even think they understand the function of rules and that rules keep us safe. Okay. Like, let's scale the shelving in the classroom. Right. Okay. You're now dismissed. With my three fives, I think it was much more impactful than it is to K through twos. I don't even think the K through Tuesday don't have their awareness of danger is not there. You know? So, it's just that they don't understand that rules are there at all right to keep them safe. A lot of these kids don't even understand that they have boundaries. Like right now, we're just like implementing they're their boundaries. We cannot climb on the tables. We cannot climb up the shelving. You know, just because you want to snack at 830 in the morning doesn't mean you're gonna get up and access your lunchbox when you want it. I

mean, we're really just establishing all those boundaries. So, I don't think they really understand it all.

**Wynter Deans**

And actually, I kind of went into my next question is: do you believe it is actually helpful to your population of students? Why or Why not?

**Speaker 2**

Not to my population, but I believe it's helpful in general education. And as your cognitive abilities increase, and you know, your maturity, I think maturity, I believe that yeah, it is. It's a great school culture and, you know, framing things positively, and to showing kids that we get great things for making green choices, or respectful, responsible role model choices or good choices, however, we want to call them, you know, in my, in my three through five, as we were making great choices. Like K through two, we're making good green choices. Why did they go from good to great? I don't know, but I used what they use last year. And then, you know, we're making respectful, responsible role model choices, our general population,

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, what alternative methods do you use to manage student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

So, literally, like tangible reinforcement, like one-to-one, I love how you're sitting in your chair right now. And then that peels off to that differential reinforcement if I have a student, if I have a student out of his chair, or something like that, you know, going around and giving everybody, hey, I love the way you're sitting in your chair. I love the way, you know, this student is sitting in the chair; I love the way John is sitting in this chair; a great job at differential reinforcement. We also have the token economy for the ones who understand they're slightly more mature. But again, even with them, I ended up reverting back to that one-to-one, tangible, enforced reinforcement by the end of the day.

**Wynter Deans**

And our last question is: Why do you feel that PBIS is ineffective for your student population? I know you answered a couple of things, but could you just give me an overview?

**Speaker 2**

I would say it is ineffective for my group of students due to their cognitive ability, maturity, and lack of being in a school or any structured setting. You know, a lot of these babies are our COVID babies. So, several of them have never been in school.

**Teacher B.W1084**

**Fri, Sep 08, 2023, 9:55 AM • 47:37**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, study, data, behavior, people, points, understand, cognitively, interview, ding, m&ms, students, reward, school, rockstar, impacted, identities, student population, share, related

**SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Wynter Deans

**Wynter Deans:** So, I have transcribing going on here. So, if you see it, it should pop up on your screen to show that the meeting is being transcribed. You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Speaker 2**

No.

**Wynter Deans**

So, do you agree to be interviewed for the study?

**Speaker 2**

Yes.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. Thank you.

**Wynter Deans**

So, I'm just going to start with these basic demographics: how many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

This is my 20<sup>th</sup> year

**Wynter Deans**

Congratulations. Thank you. And what are your primary student exceptionalities of students?

**Speaker 2**

Mostly autism. I have two significant developmental delays and three students with autism. I just have five right now.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. And are you a member of your school? PBIS? Team?

**Speaker 2**

Yes,

**Wynter Deans**

yes. Okay. So, can you just describe your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

So, I have done it at other schools, also not the actual PBIS. But just positive behavior reinforcement, which looks like there were no electronics years ago. So, I kind of appreciate the electronics now. I use it daily, and I will say I'm always better about using it in the morning than in the afternoon as the day goes on. I am not as consistent with doing it. And I have been on the team for two years and the data person this year. And then, prior to that, I was just using it as our class at our school adopted it.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. Thank you. So, what steps does your school take to introduce PBIS and support the staff?

**Speaker 2**

So, we do a training once a month that we do, and we review the data, once a month, and then we go over PBIS folders at the beginning of the school year, we have like 20 minutes, we have a quick little thing where we just go through and show everything everybody can get on to the teams. So they have access to it there. And each grade level is represented in the PBIS. So that if they should need anything, then they can do it based on their needs.

**Wynter Deans**

What changes have you noticed in student behavior since the implementation of PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

And do you mean specifically pre-K or in the whole

**Wynter Deans**

Right now, it's just overall in the whole school.

**Speaker 2**

Okay. I think there have been some definite signs that they know the language and consistency. So, I think that is helpful because even though there's a walk down the hallway and there was a green, blue line, some people call it a green line, and some people call it a blue line, and like just getting that language makes it more consistent. So, I would say it is used. I think more people in the younger grades use it in my opinion, just as my child has been going through it, but it is used there. And you will hear people using the language. So, I definitely think people are implementing it. However, I think they might not have implemented anything before. So, it's being implemented now. Because there's an actual system and a program with it. Yes,

**Wynter Deans**

No, it does. So now, this is just related to your student population. How do you think PBIS has impacted your students?

**Speaker 2**

So, my students love to hear the ding on the app, but when I click on it, they don't understand that there are points to be spent on buying other things. They think their reward is seeing the little star and the ding pop up. So, they don't realize. So, when I say, Hey, everybody has 40 points. Why don't we have an extra recess? I'm not sure that nobody's going; oh, well, I'm so glad I listened all day. And now I get extra recess. There's nothing in that application to it. But they do know that thing. And it's an immediate, they can do it. So, if one person gets a ding, the other starts sitting up and doing what they need. So, it's an immediate response. But the long-term response, they don't understand that. Because when I just needed immediately, like, Oh, they hear the noise ding

**Wynter Deans**

So, you mentioned one method: how is it being implemented in your classroom? For kids, do you go into more detail with the app that you're using?

**Speaker 2**

yeah. So, we have that thing online; I just have it on my computer. And it's just a tab that's open. So, I have my screen on there most of the time because I use a timer in the classroom. So, they are used to seeing that screen up there. But if I catch them doing it, then I'd use this specific language. And I say, Hey, I love how you walked quietly. And I'll go over and give them, you know, and we have the four categories, respectful opportunities, they can compassionate and knowledgeable. And I'll just go over there and hit it. And then, like I said, they watch to see the star pop up because the app or the application has it. And then they go back to work. So, it's just a quick little up on my screen on my smart board, or whatever they're called now.

**Wynter Deans**

How do you think they respond to it? I know you said they like the immediate reaction, but is there anything else you notice?

**Speaker 2**

they like it. And they'll call it [REDACTED] points. So, they'll even tell somebody else they know how to get their [REDACTED] points. So again, I'm not sure how long-term it is. Nobody's thinking in the moment when they're screaming and yelling and having a meltdown. Like, oh, I wish I could get my rockstar points. But when it's a quick little fast, they like it.

**Wynter Deans**

I like that. That's good. Okay, so can you just go into a little more detail about what you mean with long-term understanding? Because your next question is just to describe your students' understanding. But I don't want to keep having you review things you already said. If you could just, you know, just give a little more information, what do you think their long-term understanding is of it?

**Speaker 2**

So, my students have a lot of behavior plans that are separate from PBIS. And so, I feel like those are more understanding of it because they are more immediate. Even the

rewards of getting a token afterward are more immediate on their other behavior plans. So, in the long term, they like it, and they'll talk about it. And when people have come to interview on, like, when PBIS comes around, they know again, they're like, oh, yeah, rock star points, they can talk about it, but they don't understand it as a whole class or as a whole group. They just understand it for them immediately. So, they like to get that thing, but for long-term rewards, they just don't understand that that's what they're working for. They're happy to accept them. But I understand they're working towards a goal for those.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. Do you think PBIS has impacted your classroom management?

**Speaker 2**

No, it's fine. I guess it's right because it's a quick little fast. So, I don't want any kid that doesn't have a behavior plan. It would impact them because they don't have another plan otherwise. But for my ones that have been plans, it's not a positive or negative for it. But for the ones that, yes, they get some kind of reward out of just following and doing directions rather than just, hey, you're doing a great job. They get some kind of visual, tangible reward for doing what we ask them to do.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe that is helpful to your population or students? Why or why not?

**Speaker 2**

The ones that can cognitively understand a lot in this case, so I mean, those who are moving into Gen Ed kindergarten, I think it starts this set up for them so that they understand it. And they already know the language with it. And they already know what's happening with it. Or for some of my kids that are only thinking about themselves and are not quite in, you know, they're thinking in other worlds, and they're not quite our say they're not on the preschool planet here with us. I'm not sure that it's impacting them at all, but the ones that can cognitively understand, they understand that.

**Wynter Deans**

So, the alternative methods used to manage behavior, and you said behavior plans, did you have any other alternative things outside of PBIS to manage behavior,

**Speaker 2**

Again, I have little token boards around the classroom or lots of visuals that I use. And so those are used daily; I have some right here around my neck that I carry around with me. But then I also have little checks hanging all around the room for that. So that's mostly what it is using. And it targets specific behaviors, and not just the overall general following directions, and it targets specific behaviors. But then we also gave out high fives one year; my para realized that the kids liked them because we'd give them a thumbs up if they could do better. So, we have little things like that that we give them this year and have implemented Mini m&ms, which I've never done food before. But I have one that's highly motivating. So now lots of people get many M&M's. And I'm very stingy on them; you only get one, which sounds crazy. They work for it. So, it's fine. I'll go for it. So, I do have little token things around the room. But there's a lot of just smiles and high fives in some cases that go along with it.



**Wynter Deans**

Why do you feel it is or is not effective for your student population?

**Speaker 2**

Again, the ones that are cognitively aware, I do think they like it. It's immediate, and I think that's probably part of it. And again, it's not effective in the sense of that they're working towards a specific reward. It's just that they hear the ding, and they like that. So, I think that immediate reinforcement helps, and again, when you're trying to get it as a whole group if you know, three or four people are off task and you get one Rockstar point, they really do that. Oh, okay. Let me get back into it for the ones that are aware of what's going on. But yes, some of the babies that are in their own world, it is not that even just looking at the screen is too far away from them. So, even trying to get that rock star point that's not attainable for them.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for your time!

**Teacher C.W7PXT**

**Mon, Sep 11, 2023 9:53AM • 39:25**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, students, school, years, behavior, study, points, classroom, store, incentives, role model, team, special education students, parent, talked, reward, data, special education, staff, works

**SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Wynter Deans

**Wynter Deans**

I want to be respectful of your time. So, I'm going to roll into it; I first have to do the consent form and read it word for word. You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept

secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Wynter Deans**

So, do you agree to be interviewed for the study?

**Speaker 2**

Yes.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. So, how many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

Four years of experience

**Wynter Deans**

perfect, and right now, what are your primary student exceptionalities?

**Speaker 2**

significant developmental delay and speech-language impairment

**Wynter Deans**

Are you a member of your school's PBIS? Team?

**Speaker 2**

Yes, yes.

**Wynter Deans**

So, the first question is just to describe your overall experience with PBIS.

**Speaker 2**

I think about three years ago, I became a member of the PBIS team. I think I was. I'm not sorry; it was more than three years ago. It was closer to five years ago, and I say that because I was still working as a paraprofessional. When I was asked to join the team, okay. Yes. And at that time, I joined the team as a parent. I was trying to say I don't remember how it was phrased, but I was the parent of a parent on the PBIS team. Because at that time, I was serving as PTA. President,

**Wynter Deans**

If you see me writing, I'm just jotting down extra notes. And I'm not video recording; I'm just transcribing here. And I have an audio recorder here. So, just so you know, if some people want to turn the camera off, they can, or whatever the video is not being saved at all is just the transcription. So, you have just to make sure, yeah, it's just the transcripts up. So, for number two, what steps has your school taken to help introduce the PBIS to introduce PBIS and support staff?

**Speaker 2**

At the beginning of each school year, during pre-planning, there is usually a PowerPoint or introduction of the PBIS plan for the year to the staff. There's a review of expectations that will be taught to the students. And that's remained the same each year. But that's

reviewed for any purposes of any new staff. Just by reviewing those expectations, the behavior matrix is reviewed. So, you know, there's a rollout to staff each year during pre-planning. And then, within the first month of school, at least for the past three years, there have been videos on the morning announcements that help staff begin a conversation with students about expected behavior in the hallways in the classroom or on school buses. I think for at least the past two years, they've actually recorded videos with students in those particular scenarios. So, they've done videos where the students show the right way to behave, and then they expect to pay or the size of the actual, the expected behavior, and then you know, what the wall behavior would look like. And so, like I said, I believe for at least the past two years, they've done those videos, maybe three or four years ago, they would do like an assembly within the first month of school. And it'd be like a big pep rally to roll out PBIS at the beginning of the school year. And you know, the students were invited in for a pep rally that introduced the PBIS standards. And then sometimes, like a play or some sort of short skits, would be done in order to explain expectations that way as well. So, there's been a variety of different methods used over the years. But I would say there's really been a concerted effort to ensure that students and staff are all on board and understand what's expected on every banner in the hallway. They're different; there's signage near the playground entrances. And so, I think all those things help facilitate conversation among teachers and students about expectations as they go about the day. So, I think that's helpful.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. Okay, what changes have been noticed in student behavior since implementing PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

I think everyone understands the expectations, and it's fairly catchy. It's called ■■■ behavior. And so, it's, the expectation is to be a respectful, responsible role model, and then to show those character traits throughout the school day in different parts of the school, as you know, on the bus, in the cafeteria, in the hallways, in the bathrooms. And so, I think it's really logical. I think the way that it's explained makes it easy for students to understand what's expected of them. I think everybody, you know, the children understand, you know, what those three things mean in terms of changes in behavior. It's funny because I roughly sit in on the meetings where the data is discussed. And to me, it looks like. You know, we discuss it in our meetings and office referrals. And so, we discuss it from that perspective. But in terms of behavior that doesn't rise to the need for an office referral, and whether or not those behaviors that are expected to be managed in the classroom, whether or not those behaviors are getting better for all teachers, I don't necessarily know if that's the case. I do think that there have been fewer office referral types of behaviors. I think that overall, I mean, there's probably been a good positive change in those types of things. But I think that, and I think, and I'm sorry, I don't mean to ramble.

**Wynter Deans**

No, no, you're fine.

**Speaker 2**

Students are also incentivized to, you know, follow procedures. So, I know that there have been years where there has been a lot more emphasis on every staff member taking responsibility for giving PBIS points. And so, you know, the website is a nice website, and it's easily set up and everything so that you can give points to students in your classroom. And I know in past years I've been, there's been more of a push for support staff to download the app on their phone so that when they catch students being good, and I'm talking like parents, cafeterias, staff, lunchroom monitors, anyone can catch a student doing the right thing, they can assign points. And I think that was that was very effective when that was encouraged. There's been some years where that hasn't been encouraged as much as in other years. But I think that I think that that that was on the right track in the sense that students, under those circumstances, really felt like there was always an adult watching and paying attention and calling them to task even if the teacher, you know, what's not there. So, I think that in the years that we were more focused on getting all staff on board to participate in giving points, things worked better than just having the classroom teacher assign points. But the students look forward to the incentives; they usually don't know how many they were last year. I know that this year, there are four big incentives planned. So, the students have to have banked, you know, at least 100 points to qualify for those quarterly incentive activities. And then the school store also operates so that students can also choose to use their points to buy things from the school store. And I know that the kids get really excited about the school store. It hasn't rolled out yet. But they have posted around the school the different types of things to share that will be sold in the school store. And I think that's also really effective because it generates excitement about where these points are going. So, they don't really seem like it, especially for the younger grades. And then, of course, where, you know, kids in special education, it's not this vague notion of points, you know, they really have the ability to make an association with, Hey, I'm earning points for my good behavior, and then I'm actually it's actually going to convert to something that has worth to me.

### **Wynter Deans**

That's good. Thank you for a great explanation for that. I know you just talked about the overall student behavior, like just overall in the school, but what about your population of students? How has it impacted your population?

### **Speaker 2**

I work with three- to five-year-olds in pre-K, so we try. We talk about being respectful and responsible, being a role model, and trying to relay that in terms they understand. It helps in many ways from our students who are doing well; it probably doesn't matter either way. Because these days, most of our students stay at the school even after they, you know, are done with special needs pre-K, I think acclimating them early on to the culture is helpful. And then the behavior expectations. I think that it can still be difficult for children in my population and age group to wait for rewards. As you probably know, most of our special education students need something much more immediate. Many times, we've been waiting until the end of the week for a reward or, you know, to be able to use points or cash, and points for something is a long wait. So, we are encouraged, you know, to make some things fit for our classroom. So, I know in the past, we've been told, or the team has stressed to teachers, if you want to have your own classroom store, you

want to allow students to use their points in your classroom. In addition to or, instead of using the school store so that you have the ability to control how often you are rewarding students, you can do that. But I know, I've never done that. But I know the teachers who have tried to have said, well, it just gets it's a lot more a process when I've got to sit here and you know, the duck points on my own because they're already, I think keeping track of how many points to students are spinning in the store, as well as how many points the students might be spinning in their classroom store. All that has to be kept track of because students save points for the quarterly incentives. And some people are, you know, some students who want not to wait. They want to spend the money. So, I think some of that is a little complicated.

**Wynter Deans**

So, how do you implement PBIS in your class?

**Speaker 2**

Um, I took the points using the website. In the past, I would say that since COVID, honestly, and I've only really been teaching, I started teaching in the fall of [REDACTED]. But when I was a parent in other classrooms, I noticed that before [REDACTED] the store operated on a more reliable schedule. So, the kids knew the school store would open every week after COVID. It was left that was less the case. And so, kids could not necessarily rely on when the school store might be like they might announce, Oh, school store in two weeks. But you can imagine how if you're trying to keep track of your points, and you're saving for somebody who's storing, don't know when the store is gonna be open, that gets a little more difficult. So, my students, I think I had maybe one year that my students were consistently going to the school store whenever it was open. But I recognize that I don't think it operated; it's more of a surprise for my population of kids. It wasn't effective as part of a behavior management plan because the children never knew when they would be rewarded for their earnings. So, I think the push this year is to make it operate more regularly so it's more effective in that way. So, let's see.

**Wynter Deans**

So, how do your students respond to PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

I think the ones I have are a little there. Forgive me for using the term higher functioning. My students are four years old, four or five years old, and rising kindergarteners usually respond fairly well. Especially when we talk about being a role model because my classroom is me, sometimes it's, you know, heavily rising pays, and sometimes it's you know, heavily three-year-old and so being able to push to the rise and kindergarteners, you want you to be a role model. You know, those three-year-old classmates, and they're looking up to you. It would help if you showed them the [REDACTED] behavior. So, I think that, you know, that really clicks with some of them in terms of explaining how to be a role model and what it's like to be a role model and having someone right there, you know, that's younger, that they can say, or see that, hey, this person is looking up to me in terms of my behavior. So, I think for some of them, it really works well. And even just talking about responsibility around the classroom with their little class jobs that they have, so that's an easy way to kind of tie in responsibility, because, you know, their jobs or calendar helper or door holder or line leader, you know, we talked about being

responsible with your, with your class job, or being responsible, hanging up your bookbag, or taking out your folder, or that kind of thing. So, I think that you know, that really clicks with my four to five-year-olds, and I do think they get it. So, I do think it's helpful, but I don't think it's helpful.

**Wynter Deans**

So, I know you talked about your four to five-year-olds; what about your younger students? How do you think they understand PBIS? Like how would you describe their understanding of it?

**Speaker 2**

Because even though the primary disability of most of my students issues significant developmental delay, I know I have some students on the autism spectrum who are awaiting a diagnosis. And so, um, and I have, you know, I have this year only one student with, you know, who can carry on a conversation? Well, most of my students have emerging verbal skills, and I have, you know, one that really does not speak at all. So, you know, we use visuals in class for almost everything. And one of the nice things about, you know, the matrix and things that are posted around us PBIS things around the school, you know, they use visuals as well. So, I think that, you know, that's helpful. But it's, I mean, it's hard to cage, really, from those students having they perceive. And I think some of that, too, is. You know, we are accustomed, we're so accustomed at [school] I feel of saying, respectful, responsible role model, but those words have to be they do have to be explained. And that concept has to be taught across scenarios, like, what does it look like to be responsible? When is it when you're not necessarily talking about your own items?

You know, it does take a second use of the word scaffolding. Does it take some scaffolding to explain what that concept will look like across the school day for kids? And so, the point I'm getting at is that there probably are other schools where they've chosen a model for PBIS or slogan with words that are easier to understand. So, it's possible. My three-year-olds might understand it better if the slogan weren't ■■■ behavior and if the ■■■ weren't responsibility, role model, or being respectful. You know that. I don't know. If you are, you are probably talking to people from other schools. You know, we're implementing PBIS. And so, I could see where you use words like kind, nice, or simpler synonyms while respectful, responsible role models that, you know, younger kids could easily latch on to.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe it has impacted just PBIS has impacted your classroom management?

**Speaker 2**

Not in a big way. I think it's part of a toolbox of strategies. I think if I were a general education teacher, I think some of them might say that it definitely has. But for me, it's just one of the things that works. It works well for my kindergartner, who is very verbal, understands, you know, the PBIS store, and has seen the different incentives from the previous year. And so, he understands, you know, the concept of the points and things like that, but that's taken time to explain. So, it's not something that works for my younger ones. But that's okay. I mean, I have others; other strategies are more effective with them.

**Wynter Deans**

And that is actually our next question: What alternative methods can be used to manage student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

Um, I use token boards. I use first, then boards so that, you know, students can earn some sort of incentive specifically tailored towards their individual interests. And that is one thing that might be helpful to share about PBIS. You know, our team, which is comprised of a representative from every grade level, I am the Special Education representative. There's not currently a parent representative. But I mean, all together. This is like immediacy. So, I mean, they're, like, 15 to 20 people on this team, and administrator, all of us get together, and we come up with the incentives for the students. And you know, we choose not even, like, there's a group of folks that get together, and they choose the prices for the store. So, what works for me and in my special education classroom are incentives that I pick based on my students' interests. Or that, you know, I've worked with the parent, and the parent can tell me, Hey, my child loves food snacks. And it's always tangible, you know, some kids praise bubbles, time on the iPad, those types of things, but specific things that are specifically tailored to the child, and that are immediate rewards for, you know, doing the task at hand. So that's, I mean, one of the drawbacks of PBIS for some special education students is that there's no correlation between the reward and the child's interests, which are all different.

**Wynter Deans**

Because that is actually our last question about whether you feel it is or is not effective for your student population. So, you just stated that the correlation between the reward and their interest is not really there. So, do the students have any type of input? Or is it just the team?

**Speaker 2**

Currently, just the team we have discussed finding ways to utilize those kids are called, but there's like a school, and I don't think we had one. During the time we had COVID. But in the past, we've had a school team of fourth and fifth-grade students who worked with the PBIS team, almost like a student council. So, we have discussed, as a PBIS team, we have discussed utilizing student council members to get back on what students might be interested in, like the quarterly rewards, although the students sometimes say they enjoy them. So, like, in the past, it's been like, you know, there was a water day, there's been a day where the kids got to go out and do, like, field day type of games. I mean, most of the time, it's things that the children may like, but I know that with my population of students, and not just younger, but even just with special education students as a whole, I think that sometimes some of the things that appeal to a lot of the broader population at our school are things that sometimes are noisy, or maybe a little crowded, or may last a little too long. And so, you know, there's that. And there again, some special education students enjoy that, and it's an opportunity for them to, you know, be in an inclusive setting, enjoying whatever the prize reward is. So I think it does work for some of our special education students, but for some, particularly our students, you know, on the autism spectrum, where, you know, things that are busy and loud and tight outside or it's cold outside, or I don't want to get wet, you know, maybe not necessarily, you

know, work for those kids. So, I'm sorry, that answer is all over the place. No. But I think, generally speaking, I think that it, you know, I think PBIS works, generally speaking, for the school. However, I think that just with, you know, special education students, a lot of things do have to be tailored for the specific child, or, you know, modified, maybe they aren't whatever word it is, but they only say a fraction of the time, or they wear headphones or, you know, a parent has to accompany them or, you know, that sort of thing.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for your time.

**Teacher D. WT6AQ**

**Tue, Sep 12, 2023 10:13AM • 52:14**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, students, study, teachers, school, grade level, cafeteria, first graders, part, feedback, give, behavior, share, interview, autism, interviewees, grade, wagon, team, system

**SPEAKERS**

Wynter Deans, Speaker 2

**Wynter Deans**

I will start with the consent form. You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Wynter Deans**



So, do you agree to be interviewed?

**Speaker 2**

I do.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

33

**Wynter Deans**

Thirty-three? Amazing! What are the primary student exceptionalities that you have in your classroom?

**Speaker 2**

This year is autism. And OHI. And with my fourth graders, I have a couple of students with learning disability.

**Wynter Deans**

And are you a member of your school's PBIS Team?

**Speaker 2**

I am not.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, so can you just describe your overall experience with PBIS? If you see me writing, I'm just taking extra notes.

**Speaker 2**

Yeah, you're good. So, I think I believe in the PBIS because I've always been a pro-reward student. I was a behavior specialist for a while and an autism trainer for half of the county. So, I think that you have to find what works. In order to move students forward. I think it's important that the whole school does it because if you don't, then you know, it confuses particularly elementary-age children because they don't have something that's consistent across specials, lunchroom, all that.

**Wynter Deans**

What steps has the school taken to help introduce PBIS and to support staff?

**Speaker 2**

So, I started at our school. Six years ago, this is my seventh year back in the classroom. And the first year, there was training for all the new teachers. And what they've done is if a new teacher is trained in the ways you know, they pull them aside and do special training. And then, every year, we tweak how we're doing our reinforcements based on feedback. So, we had county feedback, and I believe it was last year or the year before because of COVID. We had some people from outside of the county come in, maybe national PBIS trainers, and they walked through and then they did like a feedback session. And then we, as a faculty member, heard after the committee had met, and they came back to us and gave us, you know, the overall feedback. And at the end, I think it's every year. It might be twice a year, but it's at least once a year; I think COVID was kind of hard because, you know, those two years were a little bit different. But the other years, we've always been asked for feedback, which I think is important to what's working and what's not. And then, like in our cafeteria, the areas that maybe I'm kind of moving

forward, but in our cafeteria is probably the hardest area we have where we do the effects of the PBIS. So, we've done, like, the last, this last thing we've done. There's four different teams, our teams, and if the students don't, you know, they have a right to earn a wagon because we're kind of doing like best in the West. So, kind of a, you know, the western theme is kind of like a wagon. Then, they have different classes in each grade level that are part of each color tea, so like our first-grade class, which we had some challenging behaviors in our first-grade class because of autism and OHI. In probably the last two weeks, we've gotten, or I should say, the students have received four, including today, four out of the last five days, which is really good for our group. So, they try to find the positive; they're their kids, and the cafeteria monitors will get that feedback. And then then they came back. They came back and said they were like our team or the first-grade team I was working with. We said we loved the wagon idea. But the other part of the feedback might be that if they're not earning [REDACTED] if there can be some type of feedback, the younger teachers didn't realize these people are not getting paid a lot of money. So, I was like, well, maybe we just have maybe on another sheet of paper had like checkboxes that they can check off so then they don't have I have to have a long conversation because there's classes coming and going, but that is probably the hardest. Then, the administrators or specialists give us dollars as well. And our best drivers and they kept the kid doing the right thing. They give them the paper do best dollars, and then we put that in. I think I answered probably more than you wanted.

**Wynter Deans**

Oh no, it's fine. Thank you. I appreciate it.

**Speaker 2**

I hope I have given you the whole picture.

**Wynter Deans**

No, I appreciate that. Thank you. I know you said the cafeteria is the most difficult place right now. But have you noticed any change in student behavior since the implementation of PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Um, I would honestly say this: it purely depends upon the buy-in of the teachers and the grade levels; you know, certain grade levels use it a lot more than others. I've worked with fifth grade, third grade, first grade, and kindergarten, and you have some grade levels and teachers who really do not believe in a system. I'm not going to say too much about it. I mean, they're good teachers, but for the system to be cohesive, everyone needs to participate. Does that make sense? I think you can see the difference in the kids where it is used and where it isn't. I don't know if that makes sense.

**Wynter Deans**

No, I understand.

**Speaker 2**

But I will say I think overall, our school is pretty good.

**Wynter Deans**

Can you describe the impact it's had on your student population?

**Speaker 2**

I think that 5% of special education doesn't work with your students and the people that need the positive support plans and token boards, but really, you can still, you know, they need something extra. But a lot of them, or really most of them get excited when they get to earn something. And sometimes, they tie into their token system. So, if they're really excited about the school dollars, and we can use that, like school dollars, on their token board.

**Wynter Deans**

How do you implement PBIS in your classroom?

**Speaker 2**

So, my co-teacher is currently on the PBIS Team. So, she's a strong believer, and so we have an iPad. And so, if we, you know, if we have some students that are not doing what they should, and we're like, Oh, I really liked the way so and so's doing this. And she'll say, my co-teacher will be like, this hardly please give. I'm catching these people showing respect or acting, you know, with safe behavior. And that is very specific about why we're giving them points. And then we're like, oh, but all of our students are participating in this activity. Will you hit select off? Can we, like, we'll kind of go back and forth? We have somebody that really just needs a little push to get it together. We, you know, we have almost everybody that we can hit the sled doll. Yeah. So, first graders are easier than fifth graders. As always, I would say, you know, your students and the opposition of five, which is our population, is diverse, but it's not as diverse. And, you know, we don't have that student turnover, like some schools, because I've taught but in some, some more transitional schools, and that it is harder to see that the output of the program, I think, with those schools. I mean, I think it if the students are transitioning within the county, it's fine. A lot of schools have the PBIS, but not everybody.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. Um, so I know you said you guys use an iPad. Are you using an app? Or how are you using it with your students isn't?

**Speaker 2**

It's on the app. Then, the students can trade it in at the prize post every other week. They get a card with a scanned time label on it. Really, and we write how many points not for the younger ones, but for the older ones, we actually write how many points they have to shop with. One. One time a month is actual, like [REDACTED] activity, goods, and candy. Then, the next time, it is coupons. One of the coupons might be to have lunch with the principal or with the assistant principal, or maybe have lunch with the teacher. So, it can be those types of things. And it depends on the class; like last year, our students really want to have lunch with the principal and have had lunch with the assistant principal. I think when he gets a fourth and fifth grade, maybe not so much. They're more into homework passes or being able to have a special dessert. You know, or doing something with their peers before they choose to do something with one of us. But I think they have a few differences. This is my first year in first grade all the time. So as to see, we haven't done our first school reward, but I think theirs is a little bit different than it is for the third, fourth, and fifth. And that's one grade level at a time, and then different PBIS Team members have been like this, this time because it was a first grader's first

time going. I took some of my other co-workers, and then I ended up staying because I did say they needed that support.

**Wynter Deans**

How do you think they are responding to PBIS? The students?

**Speaker 2**

I think our first graders have arrived; we might have. Maybe that's our first grade. As a say, in fifth grade, there might be maybe, probably like, out of the grade level five, but you know, it's really not being impactful on them. But overall, I would say it is helpful. Because when I think about my years at different schools when I was doing support, you can tell which schools have a similar type of program and which don't. If it's more school-wide, it's definitely better, like PBIS.

**Wynter Deans**

What about their understanding of it?

**Speaker 2**

Well, we have; we spent like the first week going over that. And like outside the cafeteria, we have what the P means in the cafeteria, what the D means what it means, and then we have videos. And then I think after the, you know, the [REDACTED] rate, they generally should show those again because students have had that long break just to kind of refresh your memory. So, there are charts, which I could probably take some pictures of just so you could incorporate them into your study. Because we have them all around the school, like outside the bathrooms, is the pride. What is it supposed to look like outside the bathroom or cafeteria? The same thing goes for the pride habits listed there. For the most part, everybody is consistent with their verbiage, which has helped.

**Wynter Deans**

So, do you think they understand that if I do this, I earned it, or because I do it? Am I earning this like as it relates to the points?

**Speaker 2**

I think in our class they did. Like we don't give it every time we see them. So, you know, at first, we give them points a lot, then as time goes on, we give them at an interval. This helps them get used to the reward system, what you do to earn points, and how you don't get them.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. Do you think it is PBIS has impacted your classroom management in any way?

**Speaker 2**

Well, not really, after being a [REDACTED]. I think if I had not had those experiences beforehand, I would say yes. I think for the everyday teacher without those experiences, PBIS greatly impacts classroom management.

**Wynter Deans**

So again, this question is probably sounds like the one we just went over, but, um, Do you believe that is helpful to your population of students?

**Speaker 2**

Yes, yeah, I think better than you know when we had clips being moved and all that.

**Wynter Deans**

I know you gave me some alternative methods. So, you use token boards. Are there any other alternative methods you use outside of PBIS to manage behavior?

**Speaker 2**

Thank you, token boards; we have behavior contracts, positive support plans, and tokens. Our school currently doesn't have any FBA, or I don't think we currently have them on a behavior intervention plan. We had some staff move to first grade so that we could work with some of those students and just get four plans put in place. So those are, I mean, all of those are hard, you know, for Gen. Ed teachers. So, it definitely has to be a team approach without those doing it is not going to be impactful.

**Wynter Deans**

Ok, thank you.

**Wynter Deans**

Why do you feel it is or is not effective for your student population?

**Speaker 2**

PBIS? I think it is positive because a lot of times, particularly students with more behavioral challenges might not clearly always understand the rules. So, I'd say we probably have five or six special education students, and it's consistent and predictable. Their understanding of it varies at times, but across the school, the expectations aren't different from grade level to grade level; they're slightly different, but not everybody uses [REDACTED]; the students always know what to expect.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for your time!

**Teacher E. WQD5K9**

**Mon, Sep 18, 2023, 3:22 PM • 42:28**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, study, rewards, behavior, kids, students, interview, day, classrooms, student population, rules, pride, identities, feel, abstract, point, data, system, password protection, participant

**SPEAKERS**

Wynter Deans, Speaker 2

**Wynter Deans**

You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the

[Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Wynter Deans**

Do you have any concerns or anything?

**Speaker 2**

No

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. Do you agree to be interviewed for the study?

**Speaker 2**

Yes

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

This is my fifth year.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. And what are your primary student exceptionalities?

**Speaker 2**

AU and developmental delay.

**Wynter Deans**

Are you a member of your school's PBIS? Team?

**Speaker 2**

No, I was last year.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. This year is fine. Okay. So, what is your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

The PBIS system that we use? I guess everyone's using it because it's what the county is using; anyway, yeah, but no, the PBIS system that we're working with is nice. In theory, I don't think it is a great system for reaching all students, especially the students I serve. And it's just not very, it's not as concrete as a lot of them need, I think it's pretty abstract.

I don't love that it's more like this: the idea of all the rules they have to follow, and many of them are very different depending on where they are. So, I don't know; I think PBIS is really great if you can differentiate it. But this system is not the best, in my opinion. I do like separate parts of it, though, like rewarding positive behavior. That's for all of my students. Just because I know that will work better for them.

**Wynter Deans**

What steps has your school taken to introduce PBIS or support you guys as staff?

**Speaker 2**

We had a person from the PBIS website, the rewards website, come to our school and talk to us last year, and our team leader was on the PBIS team. He's been to multiple trainings and would come back and try to explain things to us the best he could. In the team meeting, and then also at school when we have our staff meeting. It was kind of like, "Oh, we're doing this kind of thing." So, there wasn't a lot of preparation, like behind the scenes, to ensure we had our store ready and that all the teachers could access rewards and stuff like that. So, I said there was an attempt, a fair attempt, to ensure we had all the information. But it wasn't fully ready. I don't feel like it was when we got it last year.

**Wynter Deans**

Have you noticed any changes in student behavior since the implementation of PBIS? And this is just overall?

**Speaker 2**

Think so. I think, in general, it's definitely like an incentive when the kids have their name called for a reward at the end of the week; that's definitely exciting for them. And I do think it motivates a lot of kids. I don't think it necessarily motivates all kids. But yeah, there's probably been a change. I think that when we looked at the data at the end of last year, we saw fluctuations in like referrals and whatnot after using the system.

**Wynter Deans**

What do you think the impact is on the direct student population that you serve?

**Speaker 2**

They don't really care much for it. I think some of them are really proud of their other friends, like their friends when they get it. And it's not that they don't participate in it, because they do, but they just don't buy into it.

**Wynter Deans**

So, I know you said that you have other methods for student behavior for managing behavior, but how do you use PBIS with your students?

**Speaker 2**

We will use the PBIS more at the end of the day. If they get their rewards at the end of the day, I'll just add the points to the PBIS app, too. So, then, they have the opportunity to be a part of the weekly raffle. Honestly, we have a lot of behaviors in our classrooms. Like the majority of the kids have behavior plans, so, honestly, we use the PBIS, but it'd be a good day if we remember to reward a couple of kids. I'm very focused on using my system with them, but I keep PBIS on the back burner.

**Wynter Deans**

How do you think their understanding is of it?

**Speaker 2**

Our PBIS is tied to our school rule, which is like showing pride in like a classroom. And [REDACTED] stands for different stuff. Or the lunchroom or recess. And hallway. So, we talked about all of those things all the time. I talk about [REDACTED] in different areas every day. So, when you get a point, and I'm like, oh, well, you remember your purpose? Then they know what that means. Because I'm like, you remembered your purpose in the hallway. Here's your [REDACTED] point. So, I do think they understand it. And it does make me remember to use it. And they do get excited when they hear the little "ding" on the screen.

**Wynter Deans**

So, what other alternative methods are you using just to manage student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

I have a behavior chart that I do where the kids get a star for every segment if they're following four different rules. And it's just following directions, having a calm body, using their words, and raising your hand for help. And then if they get, however, I don't do the same amount of stars for every kid for the full 9 segments. I will do seven out of nine with some kids if I feel that's more attainable. Sometimes, I'll do eight out of nine. Or I might do like Half a day and do like small rewards in the middle of the day and then a more significant reward at the end of the day. Then, I just track their behavior throughout the day with that chart sitting like our table. So, like, they can see it, and we could talk about it throughout the day. But I do that for almost all of my students, and I have one that I don't use it for. She just doesn't really need that. And I do have three Positive Support Plans for behavior management.

**Wynter Deans**

Cool. Thank you. Why do you feel PBIS is or is not effective for your student population?

**Speaker 2**

I guess I just think if it can be a little abstract for them, I think it's really nice for them to see exactly what rules they need to follow in order to like to earn those points. And I like that it's more; I think sometimes having the scores that everybody is able to see can be a little triggering for certain kids. I am seeing that some people have more than they do. I just prefer behavior systems that are like individualized.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe that it is helpful to your population of students?

**Speaker 2**

Um, I think it can be if I think it could be if it were just built a little bit differently. Like I think right now, many teachers are just doing their own thing with it. Like some classrooms do daily rewards with it or the weekly rewards, there are schoolwide rewards. I think if there were more consistency across the board with how we're supposed to use it, it would also make it a little bit easier for us to use it. It has the potential to be helpful for my population of students. But I don't think that it's the end all be all. I think that regardless, they have to have something more concrete.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you for your time.



**Teacher F. W0AFS**

**Tue, Sep 19, 2023, 1:56 PM • 40:49**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, study, students, points, kids, data, behavior, interview, year, prizes, au, work, earn, elevated, identities, response, member, related, mentor, required

**SPEAKERS**

Wynter Deans, Speaker 2

**Wynter Deans**

You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288. Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Speaker 2**

Not at all.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. And if you agree to be interviewed, do you agree to be interviewed for this study?

**Speaker 2**

Yes

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, thank you. So, I'm going to just get into it.

**Wynter Deans**

So, how many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

12

**Wynter Deans**

And what are your primary student exceptionalities?

**Speaker 2**

So, my caseload this year overall?

**Wynter Deans**

Just your caseload this year.

**Speaker 2**

AU and SD.

**Wynter Deans**

Are you a member of your school's PBIS? Team?

**Speaker 2**

I am not.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. Okay, so can you describe just your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

I started learning while using PBIS when I was in another county. I was on that team, and we brainstormed a lot of ideas for school-wide things. And we had a lot of like really big events for the kids. So, in December, we did like a little activity for them at the [REDACTED]. And in May, we did a [REDACTED] kind of thing. Then, we had certain kids that had elevated behaviors. We came up with plans for those kids, and I was always one of their mentors. So, whatever I was doing, I would immediately stop when they needed me and help that student get back on task.

**Wynter Deans**

What steps has your school taken to help introduce PBIS and support staff?

**Speaker 2**

We have PD meetings every second Monday of the month, and during those PDs, we give different strategies and different things we can do in the classroom to help. I know our PBIS coach likes to come around and check in with certain key components of PBIS. For students with elevated behaviors, certain staff members are a member of like a mentor kind of club attached to PBIS, and they check on certain kids.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you! So, what change have you noticed in any student behavior since implementing PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

I've noticed that there's a lot of buy-in from the kids with the different prizes that they can get, and that has changed a lot of their behavior from being very impulsive to thinking about their actions or even just reflecting, you know, I shouldn't have done that because that's also dope as well.

**Wynter Deans**

What about your direct student population as PBIS has any impact on them at all?

**Speaker 2**

I would say it definitely has. I have a couple, well one in particular, that has elevated behavior, and the prizes really help them calm down. And even like the reflection sheets, I don't make them actually fill out the sheet because I know they will rip it, but we just go through the questions. Like was it really that necessary on a scale of one to 10? Did the incident require that kind of response? What could we have done differently? And that that really helps them.

**Wynter Deans**

How is it implemented in your classroom?

**Speaker 2**

So, in my classroom, we have the PBIS app. And that's how I record the points. And then on Fridays is our fun Friday. So, they can earn different prizes, from bringing a stuffed animal to school to candy and coloring sheets. Some are having lunch with the teachers because I'm [REDACTED] teacher. So, it's two teachers, and they could have lunch with one of us. The popular one is having lunch with us, like, well, I ordered like a Door Dash, and they get to watch a movie with a friend. But because we have to spend our money on that one, that's a very costly place value.

**Wynter Deans**

So, you stated you use the app? Is that the main way you use it with your students' PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

It is, and I let one of them take points for the days I let them know to give this table points to give that table points. At the end of the day, they get to see how many points they have to figure out what they want to save or spend.

**Wynter Deans**

And what is your response to it? How do you think they're responding?

**Speaker 2**

They like it. There's no real embarrassment with this group of students. We have some students who don't have any points, and we have students with many points who like to buy things at the store. And we also use it as a social study tool. We're budgeting, like how to save your points for a bigger prize. The price everybody wants is 200 points because it costs us money to spend. So that's the biggest ones. They always want to know if they can combine it (points) and what more I can do to earn more. And we also have classroom jobs, and they get one point a day for doing their job. And then I have a person every day that is kind of like the secret spy that lets you know who did their job or did not. And they also, you know, get fired. So, we had one kid who had already been fired from his job, and now he's trying to figure out what he can do to get another job.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, thank you. Um, so how would you believe that their understanding is? Do they understand pretty much like what the points are for and why what is leading up to?

**Speaker 2**

I will say yes; they understand why and how they earn their points. And we are talking about three things: stop doing that too. I love it when you do this; I would prefer for you to do this. And when I say don't do something, they're very quick to call me out on, "Nah, that's not the language you're supposed to be using." It helps me to say this, that, and other. Also it did that for me as well; when I'm doing something I shouldn't be

doing, the students can say (teacher name) I'd prefer for you to do this, that, and the other.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you think it impacted your classroom management?

**Speaker 2**

It has definitely made it easier. Like my first three years, I was a yeller at the beginning of my teaching career. And now I just kind of look at my kids. So, you don't want points today, that is fine by me. If you're doing this, then you can do this by giving them more of a choice. And it's been less stressful for me.

**Wynter Deans**

So, students are SD and AU. Do you believe that PBIS is helpful just to your group of students?

**Speaker 2**

It is because they need that visual on the board, and it helps them see how close they are to earning a prize. And that really works for them. And I think them seeing the other kids and how they react really helps them. So, they get excited when other kids get something, which is really good. And especially my AU baby because they get to see like appropriate behavior being demonstrated. And that's been really helpful this year.

**Wynter Deans**

Aside from PBIS, do you have any alternative methods for using to manage that you use to manage student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

There, we have mentors in my class where kids mentor other kids, and they are allowed to step outside and talk for five minutes. And then there are certain kids where it is an emergency; no matter what I'm doing, I will stop and listen to them just because I know their behavior elevates really fast; they go from zero to 60 in less than a second. So, they have my immediate attention. And then, for some kids, we have a whisper notebook where they write down what they want to tell me, and then I read it at the end of the day, and I respond that's it.

**Wynter Deans**

You know, the last one is why you feel PBIS is or is not effective for your student population.

**Speaker 2**

I think for this population, it is effective because I think they need to earn rewards, and PBIS, in some ways, mimics real life, where you work hard to learn something. I think they need to see that and even learn how to budget, give one thing up to get something else, help their friends, and just how a community works in school and real life.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you!

**Teacher G.WSPHV**

**Tue, Sep 19, 2023, 3:24 PM • 39:44**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, students, school, reward, study, points, behaviors, share, part, teachers, classroom, consequence, staff meeting, team, piece, data, interview, kids, opportunity, interviewees

### **SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Wynter Deans

#### **Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. Thank you so much again for agreeing to do this with me. The first part of it is just me pretty much reading the consent form. You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

#### **Wynter Deans**

Do you have any questions or concerns at this time?

#### **Speaker 2**

I do not.

#### **Wynter Deans**

Okay. So, do you agree to be interviewed for this study?

#### **Speaker 2**

Yes.

#### **Wynter Deans**

Okay. Perfect. Thank you so much. So, how many years of teaching experience do you have?

#### **Speaker 2**

This is my ninth year.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. And what are the primary student exceptionalities that you are working with?

**Speaker 2**

Currently, I am teaching students with autism this year.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. And are you a member of your school? PBIS team?

**Speaker 2**

I am.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. Thank you. So, what is your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Um, so I've been in two different counties, which obviously included two different schools, that kind of implemented PBIS in two very different ways. So, the first county I came from used it as a whole school incentive, where the entire school was divided into teams. And so, kindergarten all the way through fifth-grade work. Like certain parts of kindergarten classes and first grade, whatever, they all work together on a team to earn the PBIS points for their team. And then we had like quarterly rewards and things for whichever team was in the lead. What happened? Does that kind of make sense?

**Wynter Deans**

Yes, absolutely.

**Speaker 2**

Okay, and then the school that I'm at currently only uses PBIS. Like, on an individual basis, just student by student, and they only earn their PBIS points and can spend their points for their own personal like rewards and gains.

**Wynter Deans**

So, what's, what steps has the school taken to introduce PBIS and help support staff?

**Speaker 2**

Currently, the PBIS team was put together at a staff meeting. They had a PowerPoint that they shared out, which kind of gave an overview of how that hierarchy worked, if you will. They like explicitly talked about the target behaviors we wanted to have, like a common language on why, and that just kind of helped teach that without pre-planning. So, it helped the teachers kind of. All went out with the students; they even shared like a common PowerPoint for us to share. I'm already meeting to see that all teachers were talking to all students with the same language about it. And then at the school that I'm at now, At the start of school, the staff meeting was used to introduce it all at this school, as far as I know, but we do still talk about it at those meetings, about the common expectations and how to use the school store and all those things. So, in staff meetings, there are basically two main ways to communicate with the teachers.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. Thank you. Um, what changes, if any, have you noticed in student behavior since the implementation of PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Um, I noticed that when students are working as part of that bigger team, it gives a lot of students almost like a connection piece to other people in the school, almost like an accountability piece, that they aren't just trying to do something for themselves. They like knowing that they were impressing maybe the older kids, or maybe their kindergarten buddies, or what have you. They also have leaders on their teams. So, it gave them a personal connection to different special teachers. So, I noticed that, like a relationship-building piece, it was helpful and positive for many kids at that first school I was teaching. Currently, now what I like about it, and what I've seen through both schools, is that common language of behavior expectations; it's easy to talk to my kids, even my kids with autism, you know that this is your expectation school-wide, you know what I mean? We're not hearing different words for different expectations from different teachers; it's all the same uniform.

**Wynter Deans**

And this kind of ties into that one, just the impact you think PBIS has had on your student population?

**Speaker 2**

I would say it's just less transition from teacher to teacher and less effort on their part to get used to other teachers' expectations. So, it's easier for them to transition, maybe to specials or into the cafeteria, and my students bridge out to other parts of their day. So, it's easier for them to go even to a different teacher's classroom, knowing that the expectations are the same.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. How has it been implemented in your classroom specifically?

**Speaker 2**

So, we do the school-wide thing of, you know, if you, we have those four target behaviors that we look for, and as we see the kids presenting those four target behaviors, we will reward them with a PBIS point. And that's just like how they do school-wide. Then, I have time to add the points throughout the week so they can get on their PBIS points app and go to my school store or the school-wide school store, and then their points if they wish to save their points. Then, I modified it with my students a little bit, just classroom-specific-wise, because I have many behaviors in my room. So, I have used those four target behaviors as kind of like a way for students to track when they have not been respectful when having maybe not been an opportunity seeker, you know, they kind of track their times throughout the week that they might have had difficulty with each of those behaviors. And then on Fridays, you know, there's a built-in reward time to our day on Friday, and they might miss some of that reward time to sit with me. And we discussed and kind of set up a plan moving forward for the next week of how to, you know, meet those target behaviors. So, I use it as the reward positive behavior part. But in my classroom, I also use it as a way to instill a consequence when they don't meet that criteria.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. So, how do you think your students respond to PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

I think it's great. I think it's awesome that they can see like they physically get their points, and they get to, you know, it's like they get to go shopping, and that's super engaging for them to be able to earn, they call it money, but earn money and then spend the money. You know, earn their points and their points on something that they want. So, it's engaging for them. And I think it's easy for them when I thought it was gonna be hard for them to understand the language of respectful opportunity seeking compassionate, you know, those are bigger words than I would have chosen to use with the kids. But just the more repetition in it, they're using it in their own language now, so that's super impactful for them to

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe that they fully understand what the points represent? I know you said you use the app, so do you believe that there's a full understanding of what each part of it means for them?

**Speaker 2**

At first, I thought there was no concept of the points and what that meant. There are apps that I have on my phone to reward them; it's connected to like my overhead speakers. So, for a little while, it was just like the magical sound, which was exciting in itself. And then I think the, like, after a few opportunities, have, we kind of took our class time to get on the app, what spend our points if we want to, or let's make a plan to save up for the big rewards if you want to, it started connecting like, oh, you know, I, this is what I'm getting. And this is how I get to use it. So, it took a little bit of practice with my kids to understand the process of those points. But at first, it was a little bit too abstract for them.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe that it is? Has it impacted your classroom management at all?

**peaker 2**

I do. I would say, I guess I should start by saying I don't know the full extent of like where PBIS stops and where classroom consequences would begin. But, as I mentioned earlier, I need to supplement some of the consequential pieces for my students. But I do think overall, it has impacted their behavior; I think it's easy; they're easily redirected with the PBIS system in place.

**Wynter Deans**

So, I know you mentioned how you supplement. What other ways do you use alternative methods to manage your student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

I mean, a lot of other positive rewards, too, as well just, you know, if they are sitting in their area for an extended time, like I reward Skittles, or you know, just any kind of positive praise, positive reinforcement, we do a lot of that in my classroom. And then as far as, like, a consequence they might receive. You know, we're we work a lot on our social skills. So a lot of times, if my students have had inappropriate behavior, and to spend time with me role-playing that in modeling that apology piece, and then we kind of have to go find our friends that we might not have been too kind to and kind of I guess, navigating through the apology piece, which is a big consequence of for some of my students, even just forcing them to go kind of get the apology. So yeah, just little things. I



don't feel like it's anything to do. I don't feel like I do too much work to supplement, but I do feel like I do have to supplement for them.

**Wynter Deans**

Cool, thank you. And the last one is why you feel PBIS is ineffective for your student population.

**Speaker 2**

They feel like it is effective because it is rewarding, and they have a motivator. I don't have to come up with different motivators for them to choose from or figure out what each kid likes; they have that opportunity when sending their PBIS points. So, I think that part effectively offers like a plethora of rewards. And I feel like it is not effective, just sometimes in the terminology that's used. I feel like it's too advanced for students that might have like cognitive deficits.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for your time.

**Teacher H.WMFI7**

**Thu, Sep 21, 2023, 2:47 PM • 44:46**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, students, kindergarten, behavior, study, reward, involved, interview, teacher, identities, data, share, expectation, university, kid, pose, dollar, upper grades, school, fourth grade

**SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Wynter Deans

**Wynter Deans**

You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you

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Do you have any questions or any concerns at this time?

**Speaker 2**

No

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, do you agree to be interviewed?

**Speaker 2**

Yes.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. Perfect. Thank you again. So now I'm just going to demographic information. How many years have you been teaching?

**Speaker 2**

This is my 10th year.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. And what are your primary student exceptionalities?

**Speaker 2**

I have worked with kindergarten second and fourth. So, I have some AU, SDD, LD, and OHI.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. And are you a member of your school? PBIS team?

**Speaker 2**

Yes

**Wynter Deans**

Perfect. Okay, Can you describe your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Okay, so PBIS has been with the school for as long as I've been here, and I've been here for nine years. And it was new when I first started. And it's really it. I would say it first. For some people, it was not well received. But now I think it is better received. I think teachers were able to experience some of the things that go with it, like check-in and check-out, and found it beneficial for students who were not special education students. And that wasn't just because some in the beginning, I think, felt like we're rewarding them for things they should already be doing; that was a lot. But now I think that they've learned some of the strategies, like rewarding the person next to a person that you need to change the behavior, which is a really good strategy. And it's changed a little bit over time. I think they used it like once upon a time when they wrote [REDACTED]. Now, I think it's more than just speaking. For fourth grade, they have a conversation about reflecting on their behavior. I know that most of the grade levels use electronic rewards. In kindergarten, they have them either go and touch the screen themselves or they give a tangible dollar. And with our trading pose that has evolved and improved, we will have

tangible prizes that students can choose from for one week. And we have it every other week. On the other week, we have coupon day, where they have coupons that they can use, and those change over time, depending on the student's request. So

**Wynter Deans**

I know you went through some of this, but how does your school support staff with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

So, we do have meetings, and we do have the check-in checkout, which we have with some specialists who are involved. Because it is good to have somebody that is not working directly with the student every day for the whole school day. And so, our music teacher and art teacher are involved. Guidance counselors are involved, and our PE coach is involved. And that's really helpful for them.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you um; what changes have you noticed in student behavior since the implementation?

**Speaker 2**

Because the students come up, and we've also done a pamphlet home to parents for their parental support. I feel like the expectation is there. And as they progress through the grades, they already know kindergarten's expectations. Of course, like many schools, we spend the first couple of weeks going through PBIS. The expectations and ours are [REDACTED]. I'm not sure if everyone is the same, but our students focus on [REDACTED] behavior. And we have videos that we show where we had teachers doing the wrong thing. And then teachers doing the right thing, the kids really love that. We have recently found that we need to update them. But we also started, like, a class meeting thing more where I mean, for example, in kindergarten, we talked about like on the playground, exercise, and safe behavior. I also observed what the general education teacher was doing. She went around the classroom and asked the students if they had any concerns. It was really quite cute because they're so young. One of them said they didn't have anyone to play with, and instead of going well, this is something she can do the teacher asked well, what can we do if we don't have anything anyone to play with? And then, a couple of the students raised their hands and said, Well, you could go sit on the buddy bench. So, someone would see that you needed a buddy to play with. You could go and ask someone to play. They came up with their own ideas, which I thought was really neat.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you. Um, so I know you teach different grades. You said kindergarten second and fourth. How do you think your students respond to PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Those students, so I think they respond favorably. I think it's more impressionable in kindergarten and second. With fourth grade, it gets a little more challenging. But, we have added things to the [REDACTED] to help motivate students to change their behavior. One of the things that they're doing in the gym is the impossible shot where they have to throw this ball into this tube, and the kids are really excited about it. They only get one try. So, one of the trading posts is that if you had 50 [REDACTED], you could have a second

shot at the impossible shot. That's a really good one, and then, for the upper grades, a special treat with the principal or the assistant principal. So, just making sure you rotate those rewards out helps keep the fourth and fifth graders engaged.

**Wynter Deans**

How do you think they understand just the tenets of PBIS? Do they think they know why they're getting the points and what connects to different things?

**Speaker 2**

So, one of the things we do make sure that we do here is when we reward the [REDACTED], we don't just hand it out; we tell them why they are getting the [REDACTED]. So if somebody were to ask them, they should be able to say, Oh, I got this duets dollar because I was walking on the blue stripe in the hall and or walking quietly, or I was following directions or whatever it may be, they're really good about it even down in all the way down to the kindergarten level—and understanding that it's the right thing to do. And I think, in general, they want to do the right thing. So, I think it's a good system for them.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe that it impacted your classroom management at all?

**Speaker 2**

I think so. Because sometimes, you can just pull up the board with all of their faces on there, and some of them will suddenly start paying attention. So, I think sometimes you can just have that visual up there. And it's subtle, and the sound that comes along with it. Somebody recently told us that you can change the sounds to different sounds, and we're like, oh, we want to try that.

**Wynter Deans**

You've kind of you answered a lot of this. But why do you believe that PBIS is or is not helpful to your population of students?

**Speaker 2**

I think that I think that PBIS can be helpful. When I think it can be any, it can be helpful. I think with any population, you just have to make sure that the reward motivates the student and determine what motivates your students for it to be.

**Wynter Deans**

Aside from PBIS, what other methods do you use to manage student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

Well, we have another program that we do each month. We also have a weekly principal award that is done, but even just within the classroom, just little things like it, raise your hand if you can hear me. They can hear me, and the first one that raises their hand they get to go to the candy jar, just spontaneous little things where you jump around, and you're not doing the same thing all the time; I think it is helpful, but I think the PBIS is the most helpful for us.

**Wynter Deans**

So, in working with your different students, do you feel like PBIS is effective for that student population?

**Speaker 2**

I think you just have to make sure that the reward, especially with challenging behaviors, feels like a reward for the students, something they're willing to work for. Spending time with an adult is usually a lot of time, and sometimes that is really challenging behavior. If there's somebody in the school that that kid likes to spend time with. I like to figure out a way to work that into their PBIS.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for your time!

**Teacher I: WS64Q5**

**Wed, Oct 04, 2023, 1:21 PM • 42:27**

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, points, give, teachers, behavior, kids, study, expectations, work, year, interview, student, tickets, party, class, good, school, share, consistency, student population

**SPEAKERS**

Wynter Deans, Speaker 2

**Wynter Deans**

I'm gonna get started again; thank you for meeting with me. I'm gonna go into the consent form. You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

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**Wynter Deans**

So, do you have any questions or concerns?

**Speaker 2**

No.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, so do you agree to be interviewed?

**Speaker 2**

Yes

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. So, how many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

Ah, this is my 21st. I think the 21st or 22nd? Yeah, I'm not sure. Okay. Let's just say, let's just say 21.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, thank you. What are the main student exceptionalities that you work with?

**Speaker 2**

Well, I have EBD, LD, and Autism. I have six on the spectrum.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, perfect. Thank you. And are you a member of your school's PBIS team?

**Speaker 2**

Everyone is.

**Wynter Deans**

So, what is your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Um, you just get the points. We have to have stuff posted on our PBIS expectations; we have a poster that lists our expectations during homeroom every now and then; they remind us to go over the rules and regulations for PBIS. Stuff like that, the expectations for the kids, and then we have to award them points. He's supposed to do it every class period every day, but sometimes I get behind and just go back and catch it up. So, to earn a point, I think the behaviors are to be here, ready, and respectful. So, they get a point for being here, which is attendance; they get a point for being ready with their academics, being prepared for class and everything, and then being respectful as to behavior. So, they can earn up to three points a day per class. Okay.

**Wynter Deans**

How has the school introduced PBIS for you guys, or helped you support or supported you through implementing PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

I have been at this school for a couple of years, and they have a meeting, and they go over everything expectations. You know, they do this whole blah blah blah... is it always consistent? No. But we go through it anyway.

**Wynter Deans**

what changes, if any, have you noticed in student behavior since the implementation?

**Speaker 2**

None! Well, actually, no, I wouldn't say no because it just all depends. It's like this night, which is almost over, so we have a cool cat party this Friday. So that means that the kids and certain teachers sign up, Like maybe to host a video party movie party, so the kids get to have to have 50 points to enter, you know, to be able to attend the school's party.

Then, those 50 points are deducted from their total points. I need to update my kids' points today; they are deducted from their total points. So, they get the sign-up to the different ones, and they do that during connections. They do that during connections. So, you know, if they're working towards something, the behavior will change, and they will complete their work until after they get what they want. Do you know how kids act at home? You do good, your parents give you something, and then you're back to the same thing. It is the same thing here. They do good to earn something; then they go back to the same behavior. They never really change, if that makes sense.

**Wynter Deans**

So, what about your direct student population? Has it impacted their behavior at all?

**Speaker 2**

It has it has to do with how other teachers relate to students. I have a new kid who just came from the teacher next door. And our teaching styles are totally different. I'm more structured. I have zero tolerance for foolishness; I have zero tolerance for anything. I just can't tolerate foolishness. Not wanting to participate, not wanting to do your work, just wanting to be on the computer all day and not doing any work. So, excuse me, the other student he really conformed right away. So as to it's like, you know when he's still trying to be somebody's other. It's just like he keeps running into the brick wall, which is me. So, he doesn't realize that, you know, I've got to keep hitting my head, and his accident gonna give up. So, at some point, I gotta realize I need to do the right thing. So, he's not here yet. So, I don't know how long it's gonna take. He's not going to the school party because of his behavior. Yeah, because he has the PSP. Positive support plan. So, when teachers have to keep up with his behavior, and so he won't be participating? He won't be participating in the school's party. Yeah, he won't be participating in the who kept part.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay. Um, so I know; you said you give points and explain expectations to your students. How else do you use it with your kids? Do you guys use an app or anything?

**Speaker 2**

We do the PBIS thing they gave us; we can sign up there and go to the app. So, I don't know, I just know it's PBIS. We just go too clever. Click on PBIS. Then it comes up and lists all the students in my class; our students in the school are there. But I only have access, and I have access to the other case, also. So, you can give points to whoever. So, like, if I see, you know, Minnie and Mickey doing good out in the hallway, I can go log on and say give them a good. I can give them a point for being respectful. You know you can give anybody points; any teacher can get any kid points, okay? And they can take away points; they can lose points.

**Wynter Deans**

You said some kids can.

**Speaker 2**

And, like, what I'm starting next week, I just haven't gotten it together. It's like so they earn tickets. And those tickets, where they gonna have to be able to buy something, either they can say, you know, Can I use my PBIS points to be on a computer. So, I just got to get it set up and organized. Because since I like being on a computer, I just don't want to

come in and jump on a laptop. So, if you have, you know, it might be neat to have 10 PBIS points to be on a computer for 20 minutes. So, it's just different ways. I'm just trying to think of something because other than that, I really was not that into it, just being honest.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, how do you think they understand the premise of PBIS? Do you think they understand why they're getting points and what everything means for them?

**Speaker 2**

Yeah, they do. They hear they hear from every teacher in the school. So, it's like, you know, it's just like somebody saying, don't touch the stove is hot. You keep telling them the same thing over and over and over again, so they understand it.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you think it impacted your classroom management at all?

**Speaker 2**

No, because of my classroom management, I can manage my class without any PBIS or anything like that. So? Yeah, I don't think so. Somebody else might think so or not. I don't know.

**Wynter Deans**

How do your students respond to it?

**Speaker 2**

It's time-consuming because if I don't do it every class period every day, then I have to go back and get them cut up. And so, my parent did it last year. She did it last year. And then also last year, they would give like, you know, they would say, Miss SpongeBob, you know, they let they you know they give you a shout out say Miss SpongeBob was the winner of giving the most Pete one of the most PBIS points so they're not even doing that this year. So, it's no, it has not been any consistent, and no consistency says I'd be here like, the first year, they said, We're going to do this and then do it then next year, last year, they did something different. And this year, they're doing something totally different. Maybe because they have different people running it. You know what I mean? It's over it. So, I don't know. So, it's no consistency. 10 people, a lot of teachers don't even give up PBIS points, and a lot of time for kids to receive them and make a connection. So, a lot of the core teachers don't even get up points. It's because it's too time-consuming. If you have 28 kids and four classes, what's that 100? And some kids a day that you got to remember to get points too.

**Wynter Deans**

So, I know you manage your class without PBIS. So, what other methods do you use to manage behavior if PBIS isn't a thing?

**Speaker 2**

Oh, well, I have a lot of incentives where they get to go to my store. So, I have a little store where I go, and I buy candies, talkies, and stuff like that. So, on Friday, if they've had good behavior, or no issues, and no reports from the ones that go out from the parent telling me to hit issues are from other teachers telling me, they get to go into my store. But I'm gonna start by giving them tickets; I use tickets, but I haven't been connected. So, I just got to get into the habit, you know, this year, not just allowing them, you know,



to go into it. So, if you have 10 tickets, I don't know how you're going to set it up. So, for example, if you have 10 tickets, you get a big Snickers. But if you have three tickets, you get to get the little miniature sneakers because I'm just the type of person. I feel bad. If everybody in the class received a point except for one person, everybody said, I shouldn't feel like that. Because you know, if somebody you know robbed a bank and another person who robbed a bank, why should that person who did love Did you know, that robbed the bank get the same as the person? You know what I mean? So, I don't know. But that's just me. I guess being a mom. I just hate to see kids feeling left out. You know, that's just me. I guess. My one friend who is also a teacher said, I'm just too easy. I don't know, maybe I am.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you think that is? It is or isn't it effective for your student population that you have?

**Speaker 2**

It is? Like I said, there's no consistency from the top. There's no consistency school-wide. Does that make sense? Yeah, you know, I'm the type of person. And I think for anything to work, the leader or the person in charge of it they have to set the standard. And they have to, you know, these are the expectations. And this is what we expect every day. You can't say these are the expectations; it's totally out of control. And in order to bring the kids back. Well, you know what? Let's give him a free spot for all the kids who've been good. So, is that any way to punish kids who's not been good? Because you haven't been consistent. So why should a kid do that? You know what I mean? I've been consistent for three weeks straight, and then one day, I have a bad day. And that's the day you've given up. You know, you've given up a popsicle to push pops, whatever they give. And so, is it fair for me not to get a push pop because I was bad that one day when I'd been good for three weeks? Insane. I'm saying yeah, so it's no consistency. And, and how they do things, you know? So, it's not consistent. I haven't been consistent and don't use the PBIS. I don't think they, you know, in my opinion, I don't think they I just don't like how they do it here. That's just my opinion. No.

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for interviewing with me.

**Teacher J- WD45M**

Wed, Oct 18, 2023, 3:28 PM • 40:26

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

pbis, expectations, school, teachers, study, points, kids, talk, behavior, middle school, app, classroom, verbal praise, student, interview, participant, special education teachers, data, share, meeting

**SPEAKERS**

Speaker 2, Wynter Deans

**Speaker 2**

Good Afternoon

**Wynter Deans**

Good Afternoon

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much for meeting with me. I know it's a lot going on. And I'm really respectful of everybody's time. So, I normally just start with the consent form; we do verbal consent. The meeting is transcribed; nothing visual is filmed, just transcriptions and audio recorded, so nothing else. And that's just for me; it's not for anyone else is just for me to take notes. Okay, so I'll get started. Thank you again! You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study that I am conducting as part of my doctoral program. If you agree to be part of this study, I will be asking you interview questions about your professional work and audio-recording your responses. Opportunities for clarifying statements will be available after I analyze the interviews (via a process called member checking). This study is voluntary. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. Being in this study would not pose any risks beyond those of typical daily life. This study's aim is to provide data and insights that could be valuable to those in professional roles related to yours. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by publishing the final study on the [Scholarworks](#) website. I am required by my university to protect the identities of interviewees and their organizations. I am only allowed to share interviewee identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy). Any reports, presentations, or publications related to this study will share general patterns from the data, without sharing the identities of individual interviewees or their organizations. If I were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers, so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at [REDACTED]. Walden University's ethics approval number for this study is 06-05-23-0982288.

Please share any questions or concerns you might have at this time. If you agree to be interviewed as described above, please say "yes" for the audio-recording when I ask, "Do you agree to be interviewed for this study?"

**Wynter Deans**

So, do you have any questions?

**Speaker 2**

No.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay.

**Speaker 2**

I was just curious, about how you got my information.

**Wynter Deans**

Um, we go on, like I work in the district. So, my study is just for special education teachers. And so, I just I got approved through the principals just to talk to special education teachers, whoever agreed to talk to special education teachers. So, I just went on the website, got the special education teachers, and sent all of you guys. I just sent

everybody an email. And reached out to whoever responded; whoever didn't respond, I just moved on, if that makes sense. I just moved on to, you know, my next group of teachers; this was my last round of trying to get my study participants. That's it.

**Speaker 2**

Oh, I get it.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you agree to be interviewed for the study?

**Speaker 2**

Yes

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, thank you. So, how many years of teaching experience do you have?

**Speaker 2**

This is my 19th.

**Wynter Deans**

Perfect. What are the primary exceptionalities of the students that you work with?

**Speaker 2**

My student exceptionalities are mostly specific learning disorders, autism, other health impairments, and EBD.

**Wynter Deans**

Are you a member of the school's PBIS Team?

**Speaker 2**

No, I'm not.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay.

**Wynter Deans**

So, what is your overall experience with PBIS?

**Speaker 2**

Um, it's a good effort. Um, and I've just recently moved from [REDACTED]. So, this is my second year here in this county, at the school, and they do try. They try to promote it. Um, there are certain parts that I think work a little better than others. There's not as much buy-in from the teachers or a common understanding of expectations; I don't think we're being held accountable to those expectations. So, in that regard, the way that kids get feedback and how they get praise, or their rewards or whatever they've earned, are a little mixed. So, it's just not consistent. That's all, and I mean, it depends what area PBIS you're talking about. So, if we start going, that's like tier one, I guess, is what I'm talking about.

**Wynter Deans**

So, you said they try. What has the school done to try to introduce it and support you guys as a staff?

**Speaker 2**

They did do staff-wide training during the pre-school week, the tea, the pre-planning week, or whatever they call it. And that was pretty good. They did print out like different aspects. And we had us work in groups and discuss it and present like that was a good training, to try to, I think, get everybody on the same page. And I think it's hard, right?

Because to follow up with people and really make sure people are doing what they're supposed to do is hard. I don't know who would do that. If it's administration, if it's the PBIS team, they like to make sure that there's continuity, you know, among teachers when they're implementing it. I don't know if that makes sense. No, it does. So, they do, you know, Wednesday's is our school store. And to do that at a middle school is very difficult because there's no physical store. So, it requires a lot from the homeroom teachers to get the kids' orders, tally them up, send them to the guidance counselor, and then get the stuff and pass it out. It's very cumbersome. And so, I think that puts off a lot of teachers, even though it's like the best of intentions. Sometimes they don't do it every week because it's a lot of work. Or it takes a lot of time. Giving points out like some teachers give out hundreds like I had kids that came in this year with hundreds of points. And I'm like, it's pointless if I think if I give them any more points, because there's nothing for them to spend them on. So, and then there's kids with, like, no points. So, it's just a little difficult when you have that kind of situation. But they do. I mean, the PBIS expectations are said, every single day, throughout everything, we have expectations for every area of the building, and all the teachers have expectations aligned across their classrooms, which is really nice. Um, so they do some things really, really well. And we just did the surveys as well. So hopefully that'll help you know, with all the different moving parts.

### **Wynter Deans**

Thank you. So, what changes have you noticed in student behavior since the implementation?

### **Speaker 2**

So, I wasn't here when it wasn't implemented. So, I don't know that I would know a difference. It's been the same throughout these two years.

### **Wynter Deans**

So, I know you said it's a good effort, and it's kind of inconsistent at some point. How would you use it in your class? Or is it an app? Or is it like a set system? How do you like to implement it in your classroom?

### **Speaker 2**

So, in my class, I always start with and frame everything around the school-wide expectations. So, the three bullet points are respectful, responsible, and safe, and everything revolves around that in my classroom, and I start with that. Any expectation I have that's classroom-related is sorted into those expectations, like the school-wide expectations. Then, it is through the apps, just verbal praise. And anytime I can catch a kid, it's the PBIS points through the app and the infractions. We use the app for infractions as well. And we use the app for the school store,

### **Wynter Deans**

Okay. How do the students respond to it?

### **Speaker 2**

I don't know if it's any more than usual. It's just as much as when I give them a compliment or verbal praise; I feel like I get the same reaction as Oh, I'm gonna give you

a PBIS point. There's no more excitement for the point than there is for just verbal praise. I don't know if that makes sense.

**Wynter Deans**

So, do you think that the students understand what PBIS is and what the purpose of it is?

**Speaker 2**

I think they understand it; I believe that there's not enough opportunity to engage with it. So, it's not as tangible. The school where I was in another state was a pain in the butt; it was a real big pain. But we had physical tickets that we would give out. Even at the middle school level, it was a K through eight schools and, but that was so effective that they developed like a black market for these PBIS tickets. It was ridiculous. But I think because it was tangible. Then, there was more accountability for the teachers, which made it easier for them. Because I just have it, and I'm giving it to you, I don't have to go to my computer to find a roster that my one period is split up into three rosters. So, I have to figure out which roster my kids are on. So, it takes so much time to give a point. Sometimes, we just write it on paper, but then you must remember to return and do it. So, there are just many steps to doing it on the app if you're not doing it.

**Wynter Deans**

Okay, I understand.

**Speaker 2**

And it's like, it's not just the app, because I think the app will be okay. If there were more opportunities to use it, like, hey, there's a school store open anytime there is, maybe during lunch, this is available to you. Or something real like, hey, you can buy a sweatpants day or half day or whatever. We used to do that a lot at my other school. And then it was really obvious to the other kids like, oh, wow, like, I can get that with my PBIS points. I want to wear sweatpants, like, you know, middle school, those things are important to the kids and more. It's just not as they don't use it as much. So it's a little more difficult. Yeah.

**Wynter Deans**

Do you believe it has impacted your classroom management at all? PBIS? And can, in combination with that one, what are alternative methods do you use to manage student behavior?

**Speaker 2**

I use a lot of proximity. And I mean, my number one is developing relationships with kids. So, I don't have a ton of classroom-managed behaviors; I do have, like, setting expectations and repeating the expectations, setting procedures for like everything we do repeating the procedures, teaching like just very explicit instruction on things and never assuming that kids know anything. When it comes to behavior expectations. I do a lot of physical gestures. Middle school kids like to talk about each other a lot. So, like I'll do, they'll know, like, what does this mean? Like, mind your business and Don't be nosy or whatever, or I do a lot of just, they'll look at me a lot. So, I do a lot of, you know, like just hand gestures. I'm, I tend to get really loud and excited. So, I try to do the opposite and get really quiet when it comes to behavior. So, you know, but I think number one is just making sure my kids know I care about them. And then that kind of just puts a

different tone in my room. So, I don't know. I don't know, we do have a lot of procedural things like I 54321 where we clap like we have little things like that, and they respond really well to that.

**Wynter Deans**

And do you feel that it PBIS is or is not effective for your student population?

**Speaker 2**

I mean, I don't want to say no. I think it has the potential, but the lack of consistency impacts effectiveness. sorry.

**Wynter Deans**

No, it's really your perspective.

**Speaker 2**

Like it's really hard to explain, I don't want to say no.

**Wynter Deans**

Its just how you feel, honestly.

**Speaker 2**

It sounds like a yes or no question, but I think yes, but to a degree. Maybe. Sorry.

**Wynter Deans**

No, you're fine. Um, I know you said you really kind of believe that it has the potential to be effective. Do you believe that it can also be helpful for them to learn to correct their behavior?

**Speaker 2**

If it was used that way, absolutely. Yes!

**Wynter Deans**

Thank you so much!